# Report of

# International Forum on Participatory Evaluation

1-5 March 1988
New Delhi

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International Participatory Research Network
International Council for Adult Education
Asian and South Pacific Bureau of Adult Education
Society for Participatory Research in Asia

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# PREFACE

The International Forum on Participatory Evaluation was held in Delhi from March 1-5, 1988. It was the outcome of a collaborative arrangement among the International Participatory Research Network, the International Council for Adult Education, the Asian and South Pacific Bureau of Adult Education, and the Society for Participatory Research in Asia. Attended by 40 participants from 16 countries, the Forum proved to be an excellent event in sharing and analysing experiences, building linkages and inspiring future practice in different contexts and countries.

It is always difficult to capture the spirit and the life of an event of this nature in words. Yet a record of that experience is necessary for the participants, and more importantly for others as a vehicle for sharing the spirit and the insights of the Forum. This report attempts to capture, in a somewhat fragmented and perhaps inadequate manner, the depth of the discussions, the intensity of analysis and the spirit of camaraderie created and sustained during this Forum.

In order to do justice to the spirit of the Forum, the report is divided into three parts. The *first part* describes the *process*—the process of coming together, creating a learning environment and working through issues, agendas and experiences. This is a record of the highs and lows, the excitement and the frustration of the process of coming together on this very important theme.

The *second part* of the report attempts to encapsulate some of the key issues debated, discussed and analysed during the Forum. These are the issues of Participatory Evaluationissues of theory, practice, steps, methods, methodology, the role of the facilitator, etc. They are recounted here with their diverse perspectives and positions, without necessarily attempting to provide a final answer to any of them.

The *third and final part* reproduces the case studies which participants brought, shared and discussed during the Forum. The method of presentation of each person's own experience, has not been altered, only minor editorial changes have been made.

It is hoped that the totality of this record would provide some flavour of the experience that the Forum was, and that this record would then become a catalyst for similar reflections elsewhere. It could also be a basis for further refining our analysis and deepening our practice, as well as a starting point or a contribution towards strengthening our linkages across the world.

# THE PROCESS

Tring! Tring! Tring! Tring. It is 2 O'clock in the morning and the phone rings.

"Hello! This is Malina Demontis, calling you from the airport."

"Delhi Airport?"

"Yes! Where is my visa? They will not let me in!"

"Hello Malina, Rajesh Tandon here. How are you? Welcome to India, welcome to Delhi. Yes, we will get your visa across in half an hour. Please hold on. I know you must be tired after a long journey from Nicaragua. Yes, and I look forward to seeing you tomorrow. Bye!"

Malina Demontis finally joined us at the Forum.

The very process of getting these people together during the same week, at the same location, from different parts of the world was in itself a major achievement. In a world of shrinking boundaries and increasing regulations, it is becoming more and more difficult to get people together to share their experiences and to build linkages across regions and nations. One by one, they all came... from Mexico, Chile, Mali, Ghana, Kenya, Swaziland, North America, England, Indonesia, Philippines, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Bangla Desh and different corners of India. They came and began to settle down at the place of stay which was also the place of the encounter. They came with their worries of return reservations, of whether they would be met at the airport or not, whether they would understand the language, whether it would be too hot or too cold, and what would the experience of the Forum be like.

## 1. Building a learning environment

The first process; therefore, was the process of building a learning environment. With all these anxieties, fears, doubts, hopes and expectations, women and men with diverse experiences, backgrounds, cultures, languages, nations and religions came together to work on the theme of Participatory Evaluation. In order to be able to share and learn from each other's experiences, to deepen our analysis and reflection on the theory and practice of Participatory Evaluation, and to build ideas and plans for future follow-up, it was necessary to create an environment of psychological safety, ease and relaxation for the participants. This was gradually done through informal exchanges and the recognition of each person as an individual, responding to their needs for creature comforts, setting forward the objectives of the Forum at the outset, creating an easy-going, comfortable pace of reflection through introductions of participants of their work and their experiences, and by re-designing the room in which we were sitting—making it more informal, face-to-face, direct and comfortable. We also developed the agenda and the frame for analysis and reflection step by step, by continuously incorporating new ideas, points of view and perspectives into the mainstream of the discussions, by inviting persons from Latin America, Africa, Asia and Europe to share their initial reflections on participatory evaluation, which were then discussed in the plenary, and by identifying key issues of concern and interest for further deliberation. Thus, a process of creating an appropriate and exciting learning environment was set in motion.

Of course, the pressures of time, the difficulties of communicating in different languages, the newness of the setting and the people, the hesitancy of expression, and anxiety over return reservations were very much a part of this initial phase. They had to be dealt with gracefully, with humility, with magnanimity and ease. Space had to be created for disagreements, for distractions, for rambling, storytelling, deviations from crisp, theme-focussed statements. Opportunities had to be created to encourage people to say what was uppermost in their minds, despite the long time that was taken. The large and unwieldy plenary had to be maintained after lunch to give space to reactions and responses in order to set a frame for the issues which could then become the basis for deeper sharing and analysis, in the groups. The morning of March 1 and part of the afternoon went into this exercise. The time was now set to go deeper into sharing of experiences.

## 2. Sharing of experiences

How could the sharing of experiences be structured? A large group of 40 may not be feasible. Could we have themes? Could we have levels of evaluation? Could we have types of exam-

ples? There were many who had valuable, relevant and exciting experiences to share. How could we accommodate them all? We decided to form four groups on the basis of differences and similarities. We mixed people with diverse experiences at the base, at the organizational level, and at the level of perspective. We thought that this diversity will spark off exciting sharing, reflection and analysis.From the late afternoon of March 1 till the entire day of March 2, we worked in these small groups.

Each group had three or four key experiences to share. The experiences were related in detail; questions were asked, further details were sought, information was elicited. The narration and the presentations were then used to relate other experiences, to raise issues, to highlight theoretical and practical concerns. In some of the groups, the sharing of experiences was through the written case studies which were first read, then presented, then discussed. In some others, oral presentations were made with the help of flipcharts, drawings, illustrations. In yet some others, experiences were shared through enactment and role-play, in order to highlight peculiar dynamics in the experience of Participatory Evaluation. Some groups sang and danced together in order to narrate and describe their experiences. Some sang and danced together in order to show a spirit of camaraderie and solidarity. Over this period of a day and a half, the groups became living organisms with a life and direction of their own, with a sense of urgency and intensity in sharing, learning, describing, relating and at the same time theorizing, highlighting and evaluating. The experience of working in groups became the basis for relating deeply, intensely and personally to members of diverse cultures and experiences in the Forum. These groups became building blocks of the social organism that the Forum became.

## 3. Representing issues

Then came the time to relate to others what each small group had done. It came time to represent, highlight, refine and articulate issues discussed, as well as the experiences of each small group over the last day and a half. We came together on the morning of March 3 as a plenary, and in that plenary, each group made its presentation. One group had four of its members describing the issues and emerging themes. The second group brought two persons to present most of the discussions held in the group. A third group had every member of the group describe the issue by becoming the issue, enacting the issue, narrating the issue, personalizing the issue and highlighting the issue. This was an experience which, at one level, visually and profoundly presented the issue and at another level highlighted the power of the method in expressing and relating to the issue. With all the four presentations in, the exercise to identify common themes, visions and perspectives took place in the plenary. We went through a process of consensual validation, of recognizing that we were speaking the same language, and had shared similar experiences and common concerns.

At this point we picked up a set of issues which we thought we could go deeper into. The small group exercise had so far helped identify issues through narration, expression and analysis of experiences. Now was the time to describe, debate, analyse and deepen our understanding of the issues in order to move forward our practice of Participatory Evaluation.

## 4. Analysing concepts

In order to do this, we again worked in small groups from the afternoon of March 3. And we decided that we would reassemble on the morning of March 5 with presentations. Each group was now constituted on the basis of interest on the topic, so there was a group of five and another of 22. The group of 22 decided to meet at first as a whole group and then split into two sub-groups with similar but somewhat varied focus. Each group worked on the afternoon of March 3, identifying, debating and analysing the issue. The group members expressed their opinions on the issue, related it to their own experience and theorized from that. The process of analysis culminated on the morning of March 5, when these groups presented their analysis of issues. Again, the presentations varied —some stood up and read out the statements they had prepared. Others used flipcharts to highlight nuances of the issues presented by several members of the groups. Some others enacted a role-play with different aspects of the issue being highlighted differently; and some others sang. This step of analysing the concerns and the issues helped in moving the reflection process further and in deepening our understanding of the methodology of Participatory Evaluation.

## 5. Sharing colour

In the midst of the Forum, the Festival of Colours, the day of Holi (March 4), was celebrated. This is a day of colour, of joy, of celebra-

tion, of hugging and sharing. The participants in the Forum joined in this celebration, in particular participants from outside India. We spent the morning throwing colour, drinking *bhang*, singing, dancing, cajoling, pushing. We took 'Holi' dips in coloured water, some of us with a great deal of enthusiasm and energy, and some others with coy, shy and leave-me-alone ways. The day of Holi became the highlight of the Forum. It represented through the camaraderie, the togetherness, the solidarity of all people, all humans—women and men from diverse cultures, languages, regions, religions and countries, sharing the essential humanity and the vision for a better, more humane and equitable world. It was an experience we all shared and would remember for a long time to come.

## 6. Refining practice

Following the small group presentations on the morning of March 5 we decided to then find ways to improve, refine and sharpen our practice within our own context, our own countries and regions. We began to look at the issues in relation to our practice, linking them to ourselves and our work. We sat in our country or regional groups and found ways by which the experience of the Forum could be utilized in the future. We began some follow-up planning, identified some steps for sharing and networking in the future, in order to support each other and enhance each other's skills in carrying out the methodology of Participatory Evaluation. We then shared with all the participants the plans of the regions and the countries. And those plans began to show how powerful the experience of the Forum had been and how important it may prove in terms of improving the practice in different parts of the world in the years to come.

We took some time to assess the experiences of the Forum, shared a few words, some images, some songs, and finally held hands and sang "We shall overcome" in several languages. We said goodbye, though only for the time being, to reunite in the future with a common vision, a common perspective, and a common hope.

# KEY ISSUES IN PARTICIPATORY EVALUATION

The sharing, the debate and the analysis carried out during the Forum raised a variety of issues that are central to our understanding and practice of Participatory Evaluation. These issues were identified and discussed; a number of stands were taken on these and not all were in consensus. The diversity of the context and the range of practice represented by the participants in the Forum perhaps reflected itself in the debate and discussion of the issues in Participatory Evaluation. In this section these issues are highlighted and the multiple positions taken on those issues are articulated. This elaboration of the issues in Participatory Evaluation can alert the practitioners about considerations in planning and carrying out a Participatory Evaluation exercise.

## 1. The context of participatory evaluation

One of the central considerations raised again and again throughout the discussion at the Forum was the need to particularize a participatory evaluation exercise in a given context. It was felt that the context of the exercise was crucial in designing and implementing an evaluation process, and its appropriateness to a given context would provide the possibilities of effectiveness, or otherwise, of a participatory evaluation exercise.

The elements in this sensitivity to the context ranged from the political and economical to the cultural and social. The experience of utilizing traditional and folk perspectives in the African context reflected the cultural sensitivity in those efforts; the reference to political domination in Philippines was necessary in situating any participatory evaluation effort in that context; the context of liberation and struggle for maintaining freedom and autonomy in Nicaragua were to be articulated to situate any given evaluation intervention; the nature of developmental models and philosophies prevalent and dominant in a society like India had to be understood before initiating participatory evaluation efforts at the grassroots level. These and many more such examples and illustrations highlighted the importance of situating a given exercise with specific sensitivity to the local context.

### TRENDS IN PARTICIPATORY EVALUATION IN AFRICA

Three distinct participatory evaluation approaches seem to be emerging in Africa. The first, which can be described as the Tanzania school, describes the approach which is basically university based and is politically activistic. This approach is being widely practised in East, Central and Southern Africa and is the focus of the Africa Participatory Research Network (APRN). The other which is a mix of grass-roots and institutional initiatives is being widely practised in Francophone Africa. Anglophone West Africa is experimenting with 'oral participatory evaluation' approaches that have been used for centuries by traditional African societies. These use folklore, songs, stories and proverbs to evaluate, and reinforce problem-solving/learning and unlearning activities within their communities. They were also used in the resistance to alien, external influences and to rehabilitate African society after the ravages of colonialism.

However, the African animators, coming out of their own societies, used these approaches to move their people beyond survival and subsistence towards self-reliance. The value system became constant indicators, whilst new ideas and influences became variables in this approach. Thus the communities were led to affirm, negate, resolve, review or change communal objectives and direction. Regular periodic meetings, such as the 40 day cycle, of communal meetings—the Odwira of the Akan of Ahana and the annual harvest festivals—were used for collective self-reflected awareness and to order the life of the community.

JAMES ANNORBAH-SARPEI

Yet, time and again, the reference to the political context of a participatory evaluation exercise kept coming up. There were those who strongly believed that a given political context determined the perspective, the roles and the strategy for participatory evaluation and without reference to political context any participatory evaluation effort may end up being controlling and frustrating. It was believed that participatory evaluation cannot, and does not, operate in a political vacuum and the larger socio-political framework has to be considered. This debate led to the second issue—the question of the mission and purpose of participatory evaluation.

## 2. The mission and purpose of participatory evaluation

What is participatory evaluation for? Is it merely an attempt to assess the impact of a given activity through a more creative set of tools and techniques? Does it have a broader mission in view? It was generally felt that participatory evaluation is not merely a technical exercise with a set of tools and techniques to collect and analyse data and to reach some conclusion. It was seen as a political process with an overall mission of empowering the masses, the poor and the oppressed. This overall mission needed to be explicitly understood and stated such that the design and conduct of an evaluation does not degenerate into some mere technical exercise.

How does this mission get articulated? How does it provide the basis for defining the purposes of participatory evaluation? The basic point about participatory evaluation is its ability to help people value their own experience and knowledge. The poor masses and the exploited sections of society negate, reject and undermine their own experience and knowledge. This is what they have been made to believe. It then attempts to re-generate critical faculties and reflection capacities of the powerless masses so they could analyse their own reality and attempt to transform it. It is this potential of participatory evaluation which helps establish its purpose and provides the basis for linking it to its overall mission of empowerment of the people.

In a society full of contradictions, participatory evaluation helps to strengthen the capacities of the powerless masses to recognize and confront those contradictions. In our societies, where the dominant knowledge has established its unchallenged priorities over people's knowledge, a participatory evaluation exercise tends to help people to collate, converge and analyse their various experiences in order to form an alternative to this knowledge and to evolve a perspective that provides the basis for transformation. Participatory evaluation thus provides the basis for supporting and strengthening the processes of transformation in the society.

The debate in the Forum highlighted the pitfalls in undermining this central mission of participatory evaluation—to empower the people—through a variety of practices that degenerate into narrow technical implementation of a set of techniques. It was mentioned that several stake-holders and constituencies accepted participatory evaluation only if it did not challenge their status quo, if it did not raise fundamental questions about the perspectives and philosophy of their work, and if it helped to preserve the basis of the existing reality. Several examples were quoted where it was shown how practitioners coopted some of the basic tenets of participatory evaluation in order to play the via media role between the constituencies and stake-holders, thereby sustaining the status quo.

In contrast it was strongly argued that participatory evaluation should be used as a tool for advancing the vision of people's empowerment and development, a tool for developing their own terms of reference rather than working on given terms of reference, a tool to promote leadership among the powerless people, a tool that helps to link micro actions within a macro perspective.

What then is the nature of this mission? How does one understand transformation as opposed to status quo?

## 3. Reproduction or transformation: Habitus or corpus

Participatory Evaluation is essentially a process of learning an educational process promoting reflection and critical analysis by the powerless and oppressed of their own reality and circumstances. This reflection about their own heritage and milieu helps them to recreate their own knowledge and differentiate between natural factors within their own reality from the socio-political factors. It is a process of separating what is possible and given from what is desirable and necessary. It then becomes an exercise in that transformation,

| HABITUS | | CORPUS |
|---|---|---|
| i. **Social Ego** (Relationship of heritage and milieu with the subjects which keeps getting reproduced or keeps perpetuating itself) | Question it, not accept it and transform it. | Intentional ego |
| ii. **Affinity** (Hold of heritage and milieu) | Lift self from it. | Identity |
| iii. **Systems** (Inherited or provided) | Critically look at them, adopt them/ change them/ transform them. | Systems (Created or evolved) |
| iv. **Existing consciousness** | Test it in practice, modify it, rectify it, refine it | Enhanced consciousness |
| v. **Determinism** (Leaving things to occur on their own) | Identify, understand, intervene and guide change | Liberation |

not merely reproduction—it becomes the "corpus", not the "habitus".

What is "habitus"? The meaning of "habitus" is to produce and reproduce the existing cultural order as represented in ideas, attitudes and communication; essentially to continue things as they are and to do them better. This is the effectiveness model, where empowerment within the given frame is attempted through participatory evaluation.

And what is "corpus"? "Corpus" implies transforming the "habitus", not accepting it as it is but bringing about a qualitative shift, including changing meaning of words. It is to question and challenge the frame and not merely to improve the functioning of that frame.

And what is the meaning of this shift from the "habitus" to the "corpus"? As illustrated in the figure, this shift implies a series of processes which help transform social ego into intentional ego, affinity into identity, systems inherited or provided into systems created, and pre-consciousness into critical consciousness, determinism into liberation. This is the meaning of the broader mission of participatory evaluation—to empower the powerless such that they can develop their capacities to transform their reality.

This seems to imply that participatory evaluation tends to take sides, it tends to represent the standpoint of the poor, the oppressed and the powerless. And this implies that subjectivity is an essential ingredient in participatory evaluation.

## 4. Incorporating subjectivity

As a shift from the habitus to the corpus is a strategy to assist the process of transformation as opposed to reproduction, participatory evaluation represents the interests of the poor and the powerless. It builds on their existing experience and knowledge and helps them to develop their capacities to critically analyse and understand their situation in order to transform it collectively. It therefore becomes the process that is a non-neutral leverage to the larger process of transformation of society.

It was in this context that participants at the Forum discussed the issue of incorporating subjectivity in the process of evaluation. Traditional evaluation attempts to deny and negate the subjectivity of the participants in the pro

cess. It attempts to pretend that subjectivity distorts representation of reality. Quite to the contrary, participatory evaluation seeks to incorporate the subjectivity of the participants who are expected to transform the reality. A series of examples and illustrations were given to highlight how incorporation of subjectivity in the process of evaluation makes it a transforming experience for the participants as well as creates the conditions for their empowerment. It is the view-point of the participants, their perceptions of reality, their feelings and emotions attached with those perceptions and their expression of their own experiences which represents subjectivity. The discussion in the Forum highlighted how important it was to deliberately and intentionally incorporate and utilize this subjectivity in the process of participatory evaluation and that, in fact, its denial has been effective in perpetuating the status quo. The subjectivity of the participants in the process of evaluation is encouraged, localized and included in the analysis and reflection. It is this subjectivity, their own perceptions and experiences of reality, which provides the richness and depth to our understanding and becomes the basis for challenging that reality and transforming it. It thus becomes the basis for defining, elaborating and enhancing the participation of the subjects in the process of evaluation.

## 5. The issue of participation

The issue of participation in participatory evaluation is a much abused, confused and maligned one. Participation has been seen as a way of getting the actors in the process excited about the process—getting them involved, getting them active. Many a times it is seen as a gimmick, as a technique; as a way of finding out how people feel and react, as an instrumental aspect of the evaluation exercise.

## EPISTEMOLOGY: WHERE DO CORRECT IDEAS COME FROM

Viewpoint and standpoint are developed on the basis of our theory of knowledge.

The classic example of the frog in the well who thought that the heavens were only those that he saw from the bottom of the well, until he climbed out of the well and realize that there was a lot more of the heavens, comes to my mind.

Although I must say that the frog still preferred and has continued to be loyal to that part of the heavens that he continues to see from the bottom of the well. He is a wiser frog, but he has not rejected his part of the heavens.

Another example that comes to my mind is that the process of conscientization not unlike that described by Paolo Freire where the organizer or the researcher gathers the new data, the different perceptions of the individualized masses, systematizes them, similar to that process is putting together the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle.

Later he presents the complete jigsaw puzzle back to the scattered masses who recognize their reflection, the reflection of each of them, galvanizing them into a unified consciousness of a class—the workers, the peasants; of a sector—youth, women, and so on.

So intimate is this process of conscientization that its betrayal by those who have always seen the sky outside the frog's well can lead to destruction and new subjugation. Worse still is the betrayal by the frog who has seen the sky from the bottom of the well and has struggled out of it to see the vastness of the heavens and has not only rejected that part of his heavens but also condemned his fellow-frogs forever to the bottom of the well.

There is, therefore, justification in the statement that participatory evaluation can only be genuine if it is a scientific instrument of the organized masses in their bid for liberation from powerlessness and helplessness, from oppression and exploitation, from ignorance and superstition.

NOEL MONDEJAR

However, participants in the Forum, by and large, rejected this position and felt that participation is the central issue in participatory evaluation and a normative one at that. Participatory evaluation builds on the notions of centrality of the people in the process of reflection and analysis. An overall mission of empowerment of the people is not possible unless they remain at the central stage of the evaluation process.

In this context the notion of decisive and non-decisive participants was based. Decisive participants are those who are central to the process that is being evaluated. These are the activists, the animators, the local people. The non-decisive participants are those who have stakes in the evaluation process but are not central to it. These are the intermediary organizations, the donors and other stake-holders. It is important to recognize that any evaluation exercise encompasses a vast constituency which has multiple stake in the outcome of that exercise. The donors, the resource providers, the heads of implementing organizations, the consultants, the facilitators, the intermediary organizations, the grass-roots activists and animators and the local people, the beneficiaries, the target groups all represent a variety of constituencies and stake-holders. And this range of stake-holders has different expectations and stakes in the outcome of the evaluation process.

This recognition is important to develop the process of participation in a participatory evaluation exercise. The issue of participation cannot be settled without this understanding of multiple stake-holders and multiple stakes. Built into this exercise has to be a possibility of expressing the viewpoint of all stake-holders, their perception of reality, and their hopes and aspirations from the evaluation exercise. Yet the standpoint of the evaluation has to be of the decisive participants. It is in the interest of the decisive participants, the central actors in the process under evaluation, the local people themselves whose interests must override any consideration in the participatory evaluation process. Thus, the participants at the Forum illustrated, through their experience, how maintaining the centrality of the decisive participants in enhancing and strengthening the process of participatory evaluation is crucial.

And it is crucial in respect of a series of questions which were raised by the participants, which affect the nature, the meaning and the character of participation in a participatory evaluation exercise. Some of these questions are :

a. When is participatory evaluation to be done? How is it decided? Whose needs are represented? What is the context of the evaluation?
b. How is the framework and terms of reference of participatory evaluation established? How is it decided what to evaluate?
c. And under what conditions do multiple stake-holders get involved in the process? How does one distinguish between manipulation and participation? How does involving multiple constituencies not sidetrack the centrality of the decisive participants?

The debate and discussion in the Forum brought out a variety of ways by which critical reflection at the beginning of the exercise was seen as an important ingredient in determining and ensuring effective participation in a participatory evaluation process. Several approaches were presented, one of which is highlighted in the box. It was generally felt that unless serious, careful and critical attention is paid to these questions of participation at the early stages of planning a participatory evaluation process, it may be difficult to ensure the centrality of the decisive participants and the overall mission of the participatory evaluation process. Fears were expressed about high-jacking a participatory evaluation exercise

| | |
|---|---|
| Actors : | Who are the actors in the PE process? What roles do they play? What responsibilities do they undertake? |
| Situation : | What is the situation and context on which PE is situated? |
| Individual Group : | What are the relationships between the individual and the group? |
| Conscientization : | Who are we empowering; individuals, groups? |
| Process : | Who initiates the PE process? What for? |

away from the decisive participants, away from the standpoint of the powerless and the oppressed, away from the overriding mission of empowering the powerless, if careful attention about identifying and structuring the participatory process is not paid in the early stages of an exercise in evaluation.

## 6. Factors in authentic participation

Time and again participants at the Forum deliberated about various factors that seemed to contribute to or obstruct authentic participation of various categories of participants in the process of participatory evaluation some of these are highlighted here:

a. The existing level of literacy among the participants can influence their participation in the process. This can be particularly so if evaluation uses data-collection methods like surveys and questionnaires. However, if other methods are used which are symbolic and expressive like drama, role-play and songs then participants with lower levels of literacy can also be involved in the process effectively.

b. Availability of proper and sufficient time is a crucial factor in generating and sustaining authentic participation. In setting up the process of participatory evaluation, a considerable amount of time is spent in sorting out problems, raising issues, resolving conflicts, getting to know the people, etc. However, many a times sufficient time is not allowed in the early stages of preparing the ground; as a result, participation gets distorted and in many cases insufficient time spent in structuring the process can leave the decisive participants out of the process. Concerns were raised about the fact that important stakeholders like donors and heads of organizations do not allocate sufficient resources and energies and thereby undermine this crucial factor of the time necessary in the process.

c. It was felt that sufficient groundwork needs to be done to facilitate the reflection and discussions amongst the decisive participants. This preparatory work becomes all the more important for those participants who have very little experience or opportunity to ask critical questions, to enter into dialogue and to debate issues. Preparation of this groundwork will entail encouragement and development of an environment which is non-threatening and psychologically safe and supportive.

d. Sometimes excessive thrust on data-collection, almost an obsession with it, can hinder the process of participation. Involvement of people in a significant and central way should move beyond the constraint set up by quantitative or qualitative techniques and methods of data-collection.

e. Illustrations were given where use of words and phrases and symbols tended to confuse and inhibit participation rather than clarify and enhance understanding. It was felt that words and symbols familiar to the people, and not alien to them, should be utilized in this process.

f. In order to generate sustained, effective participation throughout the process of participatory evaluation, it was felt that effective facilitation is necessary. This facilitation should not be either overpowering or alienating.

g. Participants in the Forum repeatedly talked about the need to develop a perspective on participation and how to use it as a signpost at every step of the process. It was felt that abuse of participation without understanding its full implications and perspectives can distort the process and inhibit the movement of participatory evaluation.

## 7. The gender issue

Related to this question of participation was the issue of gender in participatory evaluation. Participants in the Forum repeatedly highlighted the importance of taking gender into consideration in elaborating the political framework and specific terms of references, and designing an evaluation exercise. It was felt that an authentic analysis in participatory evaluation cannot occur without taking cognizance of, and giving due value and importance to, the issue of gender. It was generally felt that male perspectives still dominate the

onceptualization and practice of participatory valuation right from setting up the initial rame of references to data-collection to analy-is and so on. It was felt gender issues are taken or granted, and specific debate highlighting pecific concerns of women and particularities f their situation is not made the central focus n such exercises. It was felt that women's erspectives and issues should be explicitly ncorporated and integrated in the process of valuation and that they should not be sub-umed under the general category of the pow-rless and the exploited. It was reaffirmed that long with other contradictions in the society, he framework of the context of participatory valuation must recognize the patriarchal con-itions existing in society and the oppression f women in the structure of society. It was felt hat the issue of transformation should specifi-ally address itself to the transformation of atriarchal structures which oppress women vithin the society, in our own organizations nd our own lives.

A related issue was the question of sensiti-ity, in the process of facilitation, to the needs nd concerns of women during the process of valuation. It was felt that women facilitators hould be encouraged and provided central oles in such exercises and that male facilita-ors should be sensitive to the participation of vomen and their needs and concerns in the rocess of evaluation, as well as those of their vomen colleagues.

Through illustrations from a variety of tuations, the participants at the Forum high-ghted the importance of explicitly recogniz-g and articulating the issues of gender in a rticipatory evaluation exercise. It was felt at continuous and deliberate attention needs be paid to gender issues if we are to enrich t only the analysis of reality but also the rategies to transform the same.

## Structuring the process

e debate in the Forum highlighted the markable diversity and context-specifity in variety of structures utilized in a given rticipatory evaluation effort. It was felt that prescriptions can be made on how to go ut designing and structuring a participa-y evaluation effort. These will have to be veloped within a given context in considera-n of a variety of factors enumerated here elsewhere. However, it was felt that cer-steps in the process of participatory eva-tion are usually common, though their actual form and elaboration may vary from one context to another. As a consequence of the sharing and reflection generated in the Forum, the following steps seem to be the key stages in a participatory evaluation cycle :

a. **The current experience of participants**
This becomes a starting point in the process of articulating the need for participatory evaluation, setting its objectives, with special reference to the context in which the exercise is to be undertaken.

b. **Establishing the frame of reference and planning the details of the process**
It is here that the concerns of the decisive participants need to be kept central while ensuring the participation of all the stakeholders.

c. **Data-collection and consolidation**
Here the choice of methods becomes an important one.

d. **Analysis**
This is the stage of systematization of the information obtained in ways and categories that lend themselves to an understanding of the participants.

e. **Feedback**
This has to be provided to the various stake-holders, in particular to the decisive participants.

f. **Decision making for action**
On the basis of the feedback in taking actions for transformation.

g. **Realization**
Leading to deeper experience of the participants.

Thus these steps tend to constitute a cycle and participatory evaluation becomes a cyclical process with each layer of experience and reflection deepening our understanding and sharpening our actions.

## 9. Methods

It is in this context of designing and structuring the process of participatory evaluation that the choice and utilization of methods of data-

collection becomes important. Participants in the Forum spent considerable time identifying factors which make a method appropriate and effective. It was generally felt that methods should be so chosen that they are liberating experiences and not subjugating experiences, that they involve the people and enhance their conscientization. The debate also highlighted the need to look at the methods as tools for identifying and elaborating information and not as the representation of the totality of the process of participatory evaluation. The discussion identified several key questions that could be asked in respect to choice of methods.

a. **Who owns the method?**
   Who will own the methods? Will it be limited to the facilitators? Would different categories of participants be involved in the process of selecting and using various methods?

b. **Intent**
   What is the intent and purpose of different methods? What type of data is needed? Will different methods be necessary for different types of data?

c. **Culture appropriateness**
   Are the methods relevant to and fitting into the culture of the participants? Are they alien to the culture of the decisive participants? Are certain methods more appropriate and easily understood and useable than others?

d. **Facilitative**
   Do the methods facilitate learning? Do they help people take control and feel empowered? Do they help articulate subjectivity of the people? Do they help them to value and express their own knowledge and viewpoint?

e. **The use**
   How are the methods used? Are they used in a way which is sensitive to the various stake-holders? Are they used for data-collection only or to generate interest and mobilize the participants in the evaluation process?

f. **Qualitative *versus* quantitative**
   Which type of data is necessary? In situations where qualitative information and subjective assessments are more important, which type of methods can bring out that data? Should we limit ourselves to one type only or should we be flexible, depending on the type of information needed?

g. **Gender sensitive**
   Are methods sensitive to the special concerns and needs of women? Are they able to focus and highlight gender specific issues?

h. **Training**
   Are the stake-holders involved in the evaluation process helped and trained to use the methods? How much energy and time is spent in providing this training?

The discussion on methods also focused on choosing methods on the basis of their appropriateness and relevance in a given participatory evaluation exercise. It was felt that within the same exercise, depending on the constituency of the stake-holders from whom the information is being collected, different methods can be utilized. Thus, methods of data-collection with the community of beneficiaries put focus on use of drama and role-play, songs, stories; in-depth interviews could be used with members of the organization; structured questionnaire could also be used to elicit information from donors and others with whom the organization comes in contact. Depending on the nature of the organization, whether it is an intermediary organization, a grass-roots organization, an organization which has a long history, or a recent organization, appropriate methods of data-collection have to be chosen. Besides, the existing culture of the organization where such an exercise is being undertaken may also limit the choice of an appropriate set of methods. Thus, selection of methods needs to be a careful effort, and the quality of information generated will necessarily depend on how appropriate these methods were.

Participants in the Forum also discussed various sets of methods, highlighting their potentials and drawbacks, as per their own experiences. These are shown in the box.

## 10. Facilitation

It was generally felt that every participatory evaluation process requires facilitation of one kind or another. In order for the process to be designed, structured, and sustained over a period of time, some degree of facilitation is needed. The question was on the issue of who facilitates and how. The debate in the Forum clarified the distinction between the role of facilitation and the person of the facilitator. It was felt that the importance and significance of facilitation *per se* should be understood and

## POTENTIALS AND DRAWBACKS OF METHODS

| | Potential | Drawback |
|---|---|---|
| i. Survey Questionnaire | produces quantitative data from large number of sources, increases skills of community, group questionnaire | written word can be alienating, dependence on literacy/numeracy levels |
| ii. Interviews | existing information drawn out, can generate enthusiasm | lot of time and resources, suspicion, can suffer enthusiasm |
| iii. Discussions Meetings | informal, can be more facilitative | leader/a few domination |
| iv. Pictures Stories Songs Puppets Photographs Slides | good qualitative data, can facilitate participation, immediacy of impact, enhances participation | concretization and systematization may be difficult, takes time and training, can be expensive |
| v. Drama/role-play | conceptual, attitudes graphically portrayed,identification strong | possibility of bias |
| vi. Case study | historical process can be shown | |

examined separately from the question of who is the facilitator.

An effective facilitation of a participatory evaluation process seems to serve several functions. Facilitation was needed to create an environment of sharing and reflection, of encouraging participation and expression of people's experience, knowledge and viewpoints. Facilitation was necessary to build the confidence and the capacity of the people to be an active owner and partner in the process of evaluation. Facilitation was also necessary to stimulate critical faculties of analysis and reflection among various constituencies, in particular the decisive participants. Facilitation was necessary to help identify resources and ways of collecting information, and analysing and systematizing that information, and planning actions to help bring together the viewpoints of various stake-holders in a given participatory evaluation exercise, and to facilitate a dialogue between the constituencies on the issues raised by the evaluation.

It was felt that facilitation should not subjugate, overpower, threaten or alienate participants in the process. It should not distort the opinions or perspectives of different constituencies. It should not overlook the sociopolitical context and the specificities of relationships in a given exercise. It should not negate or gloss over the gender issues. It should not hide the viewpoints of the facilitator, but attempt to incorporate them in the process.

Effective skills of facilitation meant a variety of things. It meant sensitivity to the viewpoints of different stake-holders. It meant understanding of the context in which the particular evaluation is being undertaken. It meant identifying decisive participants and enlisting their central role in the evaluation process. Facilitation also meant facilitating the process of evaluation, of setting one stage after another, for collecting, analysing and utilizing information. Building relationships with different constituencies was an effective skill in

facilitation. Maintaining a balance between multiple viewpoints represented by multiple constituencies was a key facilitation competence. Sensitivity to the individual and group styles, expectations and orientations was also seen as an effective facilitation competence.

The question of facilitation by whom was seen as a difficult one. First of all, a set of persons having the competence of playing the various facilitator roles was necessary. These persons could be from within the context, they could be outsiders; they could be a combination of insiders and outsiders; but the important thing was that they had a set of competencies necessary to effectively play the role of facilitation and that they were accepted by the various constituents and stake-holders in the evaluation exercise. The second aspect of the question is the issue of expertise. It was felt that expertise in participatory evaluation is essentially the expertise in facilitation skills. It is not necessarily the expertise of the content. Hence it is possible to utilize facilitation and content expertise both from within the setting as well as from outside, should it be necessary in a given evaluation efforts. But leaving the entire facilitation role to such experts is to undermine the role of facilitation.

Participants generally felt that one of the overall objectives of a participatory evaluation exercise should be to help transfer and strengthen facilitation skills among various constituencies, in particular the decisive participants such that it could enhance their self-reliance and continuing self-reflection and evaluation as an ongoing activity. Similarly it was felt that part of the focus in a participatory evaluation exercise should include evaluation of the facilitation and the facilitators. This will ensure accountability as well as an opportunity for reflection and learning about the role of facilitation.

The debate highlighted the importance of facilitation in participatory evaluation in many ways. It was felt that nothing could undermine its importance, despite the hurdles and the problems that are faced. Therefore, ensuring effective facilitation throughout the participatory evaluation process was seen as a critical issue in undertaking such an exercise.

## 11. The issue of unequal power of stake-holders

One of the recurring themes in the discussion on participation and the structuring of the process of participatory evaluation was ways and means needed to cope with unequal power-relations between various stake-holders and constituencies in a given exercise. While identifying various constituencies in a given participatory evaluation effort, different sets of participants have different power relations among themselves. For example the local people may feel dependent on the animators; the animators may feel powerless in front of the heads of their organizations; the organization as a whole may feel powerless in the face of the donor agencies. If the sensitivity to this unequal power relations is not maintained, the process of effective and authentic participation may be threatened and a participatory evaluation exercise may degenerate into an exercise controlled by the most powerful.

In this context, special debate took place in relation to the role of the donors. It was generally accepted that donors of a programme or an organization are legitimate stake-holders to the outcome of a participatory evaluation exercise. Their viewpoints need to be incorporated in the process. But the question of strategy becomes crucial in terms of how and where we incorporate their viewpoints. Care has to be taken that the need for future funding does not distort the process of participatory evaluation and undermine critical reflection by decisive participants.

In this context some references were also made to the need for focusing participatory evaluation efforts at the donors and their organizations. It was felt that this kind of process will ensure mutuality in reflection and create the possibility for a more mutually supportive and just relationship between donors and programme people. By and large, the issue of careful structuring of participation and incorporating viewpoints of constituencies with unequal power relationship was underscored.

## 12. The validation of the participatory evaluation process

An important and interesting issue related to the question of how does one validate a participatory evaluation exercise. What are the bases by which validation of participatory evaluation occurs? What are the indications for assessing validation? Are there some important dimensions in this validation which need to be understood at the very start of the process?

Participants in the Forum deliberated on this issue at some length and some interesting aspects on validation of a participatory evaluation exercise were presented.

It was mentioned that if PE is a collective process of reflection and action on both the past and the future, then it helps the group to critically reflect upon its primary objectives, its goals, its process and how empowerment of the marginalized has taken place. Thus, it brings to the group's attention whether their plan of action has been effective and meaningful, or not. In such a process PE is valid if it brings to the consciousness of the group their actual realities and thus helps bring about and catalyze change at all levels of functioning.

The question that logically follows is: How does one arrive at the indicators of this change? If we predetermine the indicators then the assumption is that we are predetermining the outcome. Conversely, if we perceive change as a dynamic process then one cannot predict the outcome. In the former, the process becomes manipulative leading towards "expected" goals or results.

However, it was discussed that PE processes have certain inherent value-systems which are reflected in the overall goals and objectives; which are premised upon the fact that the oppressed have to act on the basis of their collective strength to liberate themselves from the exploitative structures. Thus the PE process has within itself certain value-based indicators.

Conventional evaluation efforts or evaluation carried out on behalf of certain stakeholders (like donors) anticipates and progresses upon a harmony approach, leading to the maintenance of the *status quo*, through mere incremental improvements. PE, on the other hand, highlights the inherent contradictions among and within the various constituencies. If this "highlighting" leads to a questioning of assumptions, then this in itself is a validation of PE.

The PE process helps highlight not only individual strengths, capabilities and limits, but also attempts to harmonize intergroup relationships, the focus of PE is not on "personal salvation" at the expense of social liberation. As also, PE diagnoses organizational strengths and weaknesses through a collective process by the members themselves, further action on these diagnoses is needed. This further action establishes the chain of PR, PT and PE and thus justifies the wholistic and a continuum approach of PE.

Therefore, from the above, what validates PE is the process itself leading to change: individual, group, organizational, social-economic and political.

In certain evaluation processes, where the facilitator imposes a set of analysis on the group, it may lead to a temporary change in the group in order to meet their immediate ends or needs, but they have not been internalized by the process—this is temporary validation. We need to distinguish between different types of change :

Superficial *versus* Permanent
Cognitive *versus* Behavioural
Visible *versus* Invisible
Tangible *versus* Intangible
Individual *versus* Collective
Conceptual *versus* Operational
Ideological *versus* Organizational

It is this distinction which helps us in understanding the validation. We have to emphasize and reiterate the diagnostic value of PE. Yet another validation of PE lies in the belief and practice of PE that during the elaboration and the implementation of the process, skills and capacities are built within the group by the facilitators, such that it becomes an ongoing process, in contrast to conventional practices, where dependency is deliberately created on the outside facilitator thus negating the very premise of PE. The validation of PE lies in the process of PE which demystifies evaluation and shifts control of the methods to the group.

The process of PE leading to empowerment and liberation of the powerless is its major validation.

# CASE STUDIES

# WOMEN'S DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME
# Rajasthan, India

## Introduction

This is a report of an attempt to review the Women's Development Programme (WDP) of the Government of Rajasthan. It covers a period of 18 months, beginning with the first training programme of 24 'sathins' (in Jaipur district) in August 1984 to February 1986 when six districts had been covered with the appointment of nearly 250 women functionaries. It is our contention that the main feature which has contributed to the strength as well as the cautious 'speed' of the programme is its evaluation and monitoring system. Evaluation in this context is interpreted as 'shared reflection' which is woven in each of its processes, be it a training programme or a village meeting or a workshop for subsequent planning. The process of monitoring, in this light, becomes one of 'revising' the strategies in view of the freshly acquired knowledge through group-reflection. These two features, in turn, give a concrete content to the notion of 'participation'.

## Background: Aims and objectives

WDP, as an announced programme of the Government of Rajasthan, came into being in the context of many existing development schemes. It registered a clear recognition that a fresh approach to women's development was needed. Despite the fact that serious attempts were being made to divert 'benefits' to women, it was apparent that their condition had continued to be that of subjugation and deprivation. WDP's point of departure can be seen in making a shift of attention from 'delivery mechanisms' which so far had looked at women as objects of compassion and welfare, to a serious attempt to strengthen the so called 'recipients'. It meant a revised perspective in which the running assumption was that of viewing women as equal partners with men in the process of development and assisting in removing all such blocks as prevent the manifestation of this sense of equality. It also took note of the fact that men had been entrusted with the responsibility for women's development in the family, government and society far too long. It was felt that a shift was necessary to entrust these responsibilities to women at all levels. Putting these two approaches together, the principal aim of WDP was seen as an attempt to empower women through a process of education and training, communication of information, and collective action in order to bring about a change in women's social and economic status.

## Organizational structure of WDP

The following organizational structure was envisaged for WDP in early 1984. This continues to be the formal pattern around which WDP weaves its activities.

a. **Village level**
Each selected gram panchayat has a trained village level worker called a 'sathin' who belongs to one of the villages of the gram panchayat. She is responsible for the formation of women's forums at the village level. She works in close linkage with nine other sathins of neighbouring gram panchayats. The cluster of 10 gram panchayats with 10 sathins is co-ordinated by one 'pracheta'

b. **Block level**
The pracheta, a block level government functionary, provides support and guidance to the sathin. She also provides the communication link with the district level.

c. **District level**

i. At the district level, the District Women's Development Agency (DWDA) has been placed under the chairmanship of the District Collector. Each DWDA has a project director who is assisted by a project officer.

ii. Technical resource support is provided at the district level by the Information Development and Resource Agency (IDARA). This is a voluntary agency working in the field of adult education and rural development.

d. State level
   i. The District IDARAs are coordinated by the state IDARA.
   ii. The Director of WDP is the overall incharge of the programme.
   iii. The monitoring and evaluation of the programme is facilitated by the Institute of Development Studies (IDSO), Jaipur.

## Designing a monitoring and evaluation system

A review of earlier experience in development interventions showed that generally monitoring and evaluation had been the most neglected areas of the development programmes. In a few cases, in which evaluation had been undertaken, it had been an 'external' activity, carried out by professional researchers either at the end of a development programme or after periodic intervals which were fairly long. These studies had been more in the nature of an 'audit'—the emphasis being on finding out whether the programme 'worked'. Since the evaluation studies were regarded as fault-finding exercises, they were perceived by the functionaries as being a 'threat' to them and, as a result, the findings were ignored. Also, the emphasis of these evaluation studies tended to be on the quantitative dimensions of the programmes.

## Salient features of the monitoring and evaluation system for WDP

The monitoring and evaluation systems were seen as complementary processes their aim being to 'improve' the programme. Evaluation was envisaged as an essentially internal process to be undertaken by the functionaries themselves as well as the community of learners. It was also considered to be an organic process of learning. It aimed at the functionaries experiencing the importance of evaluation in their everyday work so as to internalize the process and become conscious of its worth. When viewed thus, evaluation in their everyday work became a process whereby the functionaries examined their own experiences, analysed and understood what had happened in the programme and placed a 'value' on the outcome of the work. This meant that the functionaries identify their own areas of strength and weakness. It was thought that such an evaluation could also help those involved in the programme to measure the results achieved against the goals they had set for themselves. When done collectively, this process would become a process of shared reflection. Monitoring was defined as a process of watching periodically the progress of WDP with a view to taking corrective measures in order to optimise the effectiveness of the programme. Evaluation was defined as a process of collecting evidence and using it to judge the degree to which the objectives of the programme were achieved. This assessment, in turn, was to form the basis for subsequent decision-making in the programme.

The important characteristics of such a system were summarized as :

1. Evaluation as a process of reflection meant an honest stock taking by all those involved in order to ascertain what had been achieved, what had not been achieved and for what reasons.

2. The emphasis in this evaluation was on quality rather than on quantity, on 'process' rather than on meeting 'targets'.

3. Evaluation was a two-way process. Information did not merely flow from bottom to top, but both ways. In other words, 'feedback' for corrective action was an important component.

4. Evaluation was participatory. This entailed a minimizing of hierarchical relationships. It meant listening to others, respecting, sharing and learning from one another.

Evaluation and monitoring required a focus on : (i) nature of the programme, (ii) process of judgement; (iii) evidence, (iv) degree of achievement/shortfall and (v) decision-making.

The first point emphasized the need for a clarification of what to evaluate. The clearer the perception and understanding of what was to be evaluated, the better were the chances of the evaluation exercise being meaningful. In the context of WDP, women's development was considered the focal point of evaluation and it was envisaged that women's development would be possible if women could (a) move from total acceptance of the present situation to a point of questioning it and seeing it as a problem which needed to be solved, (b)

move from the 'I' to the 'we', i.e. begin to realize that it was not a personal but a common problem, (c) begin to examine the alternatives which were available, (d) arrive at a decision by consensus, (e) evolve leadership for within and take collective action.

It was envisaged that evaluation of WDP's impact on village women would need to recognize all the activities (or creation of conditions for such activities) which generated co-operation/association, enthusiasm, learning desire, strengthened tools of perception and analysis. This had to be seen not only at the village levels but at the block, district and state level of WDP.

The second point involved a process of judgement. The question to be asked was : 'what perceptions were to be taken as important' ? This was in view of the fact that there existed a stereotype of an evaluation exercise which had a form of being 'scholarly' or 'serious'. It led to a trivialization of the more significant and meaningful features that appeared 'ordinary' or 'trite'. For example, the fact that if women had started asking questions, overcoming their shyness and lack of confidence, it may not have been regarded as an important indicator of change or development. It was recognized that in WDP constant efforts had to be made to pay special attention to this aspect of evaluation so that functionaries at all levels would become more sensitive to the simple but significant perceptions of change.

The third element was that of evidence. This meant collection of relevant information and data in order to arrive at a dependable judgement. This, in turn, entailed an identification of data sources, application of different techniques (e.g., written, oral methods, observations, interviews, etc.) for data collection, both quantitative and qualitative, and an interpretation of data.

The fourth element was closely connected with evidence and its interpretation which would give an indication of the degree of achievement or shortfall in relation to objectives. This process of judgement would involve a continuous reassessment. For example, at one stage it may be a positive indicator if women's groups showed a strong desire to sing and dance and come together. At another point, this very feature would become a negative indicator if the women's groups made it a repetitive monotonous feature at the cost of possible learning opportunities.

Lastly, evaluation had to be used for different types of decision making, such as increasing or decreasing the involvement of resource persons providing new information inputs, seeking effective co-ordination between development agencies, etc.

Since evaluation was envisaged as an essentially internal process that was to be undertaken by the functionaries at all levels as well as by the village participants, it was essential that the channels of communication should be such as to facilitate participation and learning from one another. Also, it was necessary to ensure prompt feedback action. Various forums of evaluation were designed for this purpose.

## Forums of evaluation

These were planned at the village, district and state levels. At the village level it was felt that a 'jajam' or meeting would be held every month and would involve one pracheta and 10 sathins. The objectives of holding a jajam every month would be :—

1. to give opportunity to the sathins to talk about their work and share their experience;
2. to enable sathins to air their problems and understand commonalities;
3. to enable sathins to remain in touch with one another and build their solidarity;
4. to provide an opportunity to the prachetas to collect basic information from the sathins about the programme; and
5. to enable the pracheta to provide feedback to the sathins in the problems identified by them.

Likewise, it was envisaged that a 'shivir' or camp would be held every third month in each district and would involve 20 - 30 sathins, prachetas and WDP officials. Besides the jajam and shivir at the village level, other forums were created at the district and state levels. A monthly pracheta meeting at DWDA was seen as a necessary formal get together of prachetas, IDARA and DWDA personnel to provide an opportunity for critical reflection on the past month's experiences. Likewise, IDARAs were to organize periodic workshops to provide an academic input on any of the development issues identified in the meetings. At the state level, the state IDARA and IDS(J) were to consolidate the reports from the districts and filter relevant issues for holding seminars/workshops with national experts. These reflections were

to be relayed down by state IDARA to the village level in an appropriate idiom for facilitating necessary action.

## Participatory Evaluation : Some operational details

Reflection and analysis have characterized every stage of all training programmes for WDP. For example, if a role-play is done on any issue, participants sit together and analyse: what happened, why it happened, what were its implications. This kind of questioning takes place all the time—whether it is for doing exercises together, going through a simulation experience or seeking information on health or law or on government schemes. Besides this, there is an overall appraisal of what each participant perceived the training to be. This is done not only through reporting daily on the event, and learning of the previous sessions, but also a summative evaluation at the end of the training programme. This evaluation in turn, has always been the background material for a post-training workshop which ultimately becomes a planning exercise for the next training programme. This is how sathins and prachetas have evaluated the training programme.

### Trainer's Diary : Jobner

"We sat in a circle on the floor on the first day of the training at Jobner. Everyone thought it might be a good idea to begin with a prayer. Why did we want to pray ? Everyone looked expectantly at the 'official trainers'. The official trainers looked at everybody else. It was suggested that each one would state why she wanted to pray. It took an hour and a half to decide that we would pray for expressing solidarity, for peace, for ourselves. We also decided we would like to sing together. We did not want to sing a religious song. So, we sang a song celebrating mankind, hoping that one day we would succeed in all that we set out to do."

"Later, Madhu was a bit fed up with this process. Every single decision had to be discussed, each individual opinion elicited and then a decision taken. She wanted to know why we went through this process at all. Couldn't the few responsible trainers decide quickly in the interest of all concerned?"

One of the main forums of evaluation and monitoring continues to be the jajam. The following excerpt from a District IDARA describes the pattern of how a jajam is being planned.

"Sathins take total responsibility for planning a jajam from the physical arrangements to identifying the issues to be discussed. Once they identify the issues, they contact the pracheta and (sometimes) write to IDARA to ask for specific information. At the jajam, the sathins share their experiences of the last jajam. Effort is made to see how far the last jajam's decisions have been followed through and if not, what is hampering the progress, and what should be done.

"Working in the villages, sathins often have to face problems. Sathin's role is a very crucial one and often she faces vehement opposition, sometimes even harassment. At times, even her own family members try to thwart the emerging leadership traits within her. Many of her sathins have been beaten up for relating to the lower caste women. Some have received serious injuries while others have been threatened. These issues are taken up and the groups attempt, at their own level, to tackle the situation, varying from a small group of women approaching those who harass the sathins and trying to reason with them, or resorting to legal action. This is not just for the sathins. Even when a woman in their village faces this kind of a problem, the sathin of the area intervenes and sometimes the case is taken up at the jajam level."

(FROM IDARA NOTES, JAIPUR DISTRICT, JUNE 1985)

The current reports on jajams show that three-four major issues come up repeatedly. These are :

i. Health issues : These come up in some form or another in every jajam.

ii. Water : There is either a shortage of water and/or wells/handpumps, or the handpumps are out of order.

iii. Lack of information on
   a. different development schemes;
   b. welfare programmes;
   c. legal aid assistance and legal matters.

iv. Problems of organizing women regard-

ing injustice in wage disbursement as well as availability of grain.

Over a period of time, other modes of evaluation have evolved. These are :

i. informal letters,
ii. pracheta monthly meetings,
iii. training and re-training sessions,
iv. workshops organized by IDARA and Institute of Development Studies, Jaipur.

Approximately, one workshop every two months has been an overall feature for the past one and a half years.

## Issues in participatory evaluation

The previous section has described how the evaluation system for WDP was designed and the manner in which the evaluation system has become operational.

In this section, an attempt is made to synthesize issues that get highlighted because of the process of participatory evaluation.

### 1. Demystifying evaluation

Since participation is central to the functioning of WDP in all respects, the process of participatory evaluation follows as a natural corollary. Due to the fact that functionaries have internalized and operationalized participatory modes of functioning, their active involvement in the evaluation process becomes a somewhat easier task. What this means is a 'demystification' of the concept of evaluation so that the functionaries recognize its importance in their everyday work.

### 2. Control

A related issue is that of 'control'. Traditionally, the outside evaluator has exercised control over the entire evaluation process. In the case of participatory evaluation, however, this control is exercised not by the professional evaluator but by the people whose work is to be evaluated. In WDP, this realization in itself has led to greater participation and involvement of the functionaries in the evaluation process. As a result, more novel modes of evaluation have evolved over a period of time.

### 3. Enhanced awareness

Since reflection and analysis are integral processes of WDP evaluation, the awareness level of village women and of WDP functionaries has been greatly enhanced. While the awareness levels vary across individuals and groups, the fact remains that collective analysis and reflection result in higher levels of awareness.

### 4. Empowerment

As awareness levels go up and new learning takes place or new knowledge is sought, a feeling of empowerment begins to manifest itself. Both awareness and action are important for building empowerment. It is the continuous linking of knowledge with action that sustains and strengthens the process of empowerment. A collective analysis of strength and weaknesses of individual and group effort facilitates the process of empowerment.

### 5. Mobilization

Where awareness is high and empowerment exists, mobilization is crystallized through the process of participatory evaluation. There are innumerable instances in WDP to show how mobilization has taken place as information is shared, discussed, analysed and a common action is planned through various forums of evaluation

### 6. Organization-building

The process of organization-building is enhanced by participatory evaluation because of its emphasis on a collective process. Since it deliberately brings people together for collective analysis, a feeling of solidarity begins to develop and this facilitates formation of groups. Although WDP has helped in building solidarity amongst its various functionaries, forming women's groups and organizing them in villages is still a major challenge.

### 7. Decentralized action

Participatory evaluation has encouraged local initiative and decentralized action among functionaries at the village level. Rather than depending upon external help, the trend seems to be towards greater self-reliance in planning and carrying out evaluation on the basis of their own understanding.

### 8. Changing role of outside evaluator

Finally, the role of the outside evaluator has

undergone a change due to the process of participatory evaluation. Initially, this role was perceived to be that of a 'facilitator'. Evaluation experience, however, has now shown that as 'analysis' and 'reflection' have become part of the WDP ethos, the outside evaluators have, in addition to being participant evaluators, have 'insider-outsider' roles to play in the participatory process of evaluation.

## Conclusion

1. The experience of 18 months shows that the pace of WDP , as compared to other government programmes, has been slow and cautious. It is still being consolidated in the six districts as per the original plan in 1984. This pace is a direct outcome of the 'critical reflection' which has become an invariable component in all the processes of WDP . The participants feel that the 'gradualness' of the implementation process is an essential strength of any developmental intervention at the rural level.

2. In terms of significant material changes in the rural context, there is little to offer from the WDP experience. The poverty alleviation programmes run by the government have been subjected to a grass-root censorship through WDP in an attempt to render them more meaningful. This relates primarily to the preparation of beneficiary lists and IRDP disbursement of benefits. The role which the sathin-pracheta input has played is mostly by way of generating village-level group reflections on the effectiveness as well as appropriateness of the training provided through TRYSEM and the procedure of disbursement of loans by the bank functionaries.

3. Qualitatively, there is no radical shift in power relationships at the village level. No sensational turmoil has been stirred up which could be glorified as a mass movement led by women. There are only sporadic events giving a possible pattern which could, if strengthened, make women feel 'more equal' than before in their social contexts.

4. As an experiment in group approach, it has had positive as well as negative sets of experiences. It has achieved a significant shift in women's perspective on their problems. They have shown a movement away from attributing their suffering either to their 'fate' or to a personal shortcoming. Most of them can see it now as kinds of problems which are shared by other women also. This, in turn, has resulted in their experiencing a certain self-confidence and strength to solve their problems collectively. However, it has also resulted in breaking the 'peace' which is ensured by maintenance of the *status quo*. There have been problems with the village-heads who disapprove of women moving away from the traditional role of being the 'obedient' members of the family. There have been panchayat disapprovals by way of 'fines' levied on upper-caste women because they have been eating with scheduled-caste women.

5. As an experiment in minimizing, hierarchical relationships, WDP has got its greatest positive experiences. The programme has generated a personal confidence in almost all those associated with its activities. This has led to a common understanding of a world-view that recognizes that the rural women have to be treated with respect and dignity. Their ability to contribute in thought as well as action is as important as their urban counterparts. This recognition is an essential step in soliciting their participation in the developmental processes.

This attempt at capturing some of the main patterns as they are emerging in WDP is neither comprehensive nor predictive. The future horizon is hazy. However, one fairly certain reading that can be made is that if the central values adhered to in this programme continue to be those of 'participation' and communication' and if the evaluation-monitoring system continues to be what it is now, there is a good chance that the rural women would move many steps ahead towards joining the larger processes of development. The beginnings have been made with a positive spirit. It still needs to be seen how far the larger system gears up its protective mechanism and allows these small beginnings to grow into self-supporting processes.

ANITA DIGHE, SHARADA JAIN,
KAVITA SRIVASTAVA, KANCHAN MATHUR

*Further details about this Programme are contained in "Exploring Possibilities: A Review of the WDP, Rajasthan," published by the Institute of Development Studies, B-124 Mangal Marg, Jaipur-302 015*

# THE ANKUR EXPERIENCE 1978-1988

# New Delhi, India

## Introduction and background

Ankur has a cumulative experience of 10 years of work in the field of non-formal education with illiterate and drop-out children; adult education and literacy with girls and women; community organization and income generation; working with youth; and doing programmes of development education and community work with high school students in the formal public school system.

## A brief historical survey

Our organizational history can be broadly divided into three phases, and to some extent our process of evaluation corresponds roughly to these phases.

## Phase I : 1977-80

Ankur began as a small, school based project, called the Abner Memorial Non-Formal Educational Project and took its initial inspiration from the nationwide National Adult Education and Non-Formal Education drive launched in 1977-78.

As its name suggests, the objective was clear, and limited to imparting literacy skills to out-of-school children, utilizing school children as student teachers, and also utilizing the slot in the school timetable set aside for Socially Useful & Productive Work (SUPW). About 30-60 students of classes nine and ten, supervised by a small staff of two teachers and two or three social workers, went out to teach the kids in the community—comprising a learner group of about an equal number. Organizational structure—in keeping with the formal school structure—formal, hierarchical, top down.

FIRST EVALUATION : MAY 1979

### Initiators

The Project Management

### Methodologies

Mainly traditional methods were employed—using observation schedules, questionnaires and some interviews.

While there was some participation of the implementing staff in designing and administering schedules, by and large the student teachers were not involved. The learners were mainly assessed in terms of improved skills.

### Impact

Although direct impact on the 'beneficiaries' was negligible, the overall reactions of the student teachers and their parents to the programme itself were favourable enough to provide an impetus to the organizers to expand the scope of the Inter School Non-Formal Education Project from one public school to six well known schools in Delhi. The NFE programme has come to remain as an important choice offered in many schools under the SUPW scheme.

It is interesting that this first evaluation did not directly comment on, nor did it provide any fresh impetus to the growth of community based programmes.

However, the outreach into direct community-based programmes with the children, and then with the women, occurred almost as a natural outcome of the interaction with the children and through them, with the needs and realities of the community. This initially took the form of a need for literacy classes for women—but gradually developed into a wider programme as the real needs began to be perceived and articulated with greater clarity.

## Phase II : 1980-83

The Abner Memorial Project expanded its activities much more specifically into the community, continuing to work through school students, but also reaching directly into the community to identify individuals willing and able to teach under the most gruelling of physical and material conditions.

—New thrusts, new programmes
—Working with women
—Craft, sewing and income generation
—Adult education and literacy
—Taking up issues
—Networking with other groups
—Increased activism
—Developing a perspective
—Rapid expansion of staff

—Expansion of centres
—Applications for more funds
—Development educational programme
—Non-formal education
—Many new communities

SECOND EVALUATION : 1982-83

**Initiators**

The Project Management

**Methodology**

Much more participatory than the first evaluation. A considerable amount of time and energies were spent designing the format and instruments and working out the steps of the evaluation with the manager, director and core staff of the project.

**Implementation**

Given the fact that neither community nor field workers had initiated the evaluatory process, it was mainly the full-time functionaries who participated effectively and played a greater role in filling-in forms and pushing the process of interviews, tabulations and so on. Although discussions and community feedback were planned, there were major problems in sticking to the framework, and so, many of the scheduled events did not take place at all.

We were also dealing with multiple constituencies—
—schools and their management
—student, teachers and their parents
—learners
—community-based teachers
— different levels of project staff and management.

These made the actual dynamics of the evaluation more complex.

**Impact and outcome**

There were a number of pertinent observations as to the impact of the programme, need for improving training, and upgrading skills of functionaries.

However, the most significant outcome in the context of Ankur as it is today were as follows:

i. A directive to project organizers to further explore and clarify the relationship between the formal and the non-formal systems of education in the country—especially with a view to influencing policy at a national level.

ii. An unambiguous statement to the effect that in its present form, the inter-school project *benefited* the *middle class school-goer* much more substantially than it did the child in the community.

iii. That even our community programmes did not really make any significant impact on the community.

As a result of this second and more participatory evaluation process, certain significant directional changes were made and are important in the context of Ankur's present and future, namely :

i. Lower priority to the inter-school NFE work—gradual process of pushing the public schools to take over the programme as an intrinsic part of their curriculum, and also to absorb the social worker/supervisor in charge of NFE onto the school staff.

ii. Shift of emphasis to an issue-based, development education programme designed to heighten awareness and questioning in school students and community.

iii. Strengthening the community-based work.

iv. Finally, the break from the Abner School and Baptist Mission—which emerged as constraining influences.

v. Setting up of an independent entity and society—namely Ankur.

## Phase III : 1983-86

—Registering Ankur
—Finding our feet, finding space
—Continuing with existing staff and projects
—Inducting new staff
—Charting out new directions
—Changing structures and styles of functioning
—new concepts, new concerns and questions
—collective decision making—how?
—hierarchy *vs* democracy—what does it mean?
—equality—fine in theory, tough in practice
—activism and politicization—new challenges
—reorganizing administrative structure

—searching for clarity, redefining objectives, creating perspectives
—internal dissensions
—swinging to extremes
—inexperienced leadership
—near anarchy
—shortage of funds
—on the edge of collapse
—the question of collaboration
—the break-up of Ankur predicted by many.

**At the same time**

—work must go on
—a sense of purpose
—we shall overcome
—new friends, new projects, new directions
—linkages with several new groups
—involvement in major current movements as never before like "working with Sikh widows after November 1984"
—need to evaluate as a necessary part of survival.

THIRD EVALUATION : 1985-87

This too can be divided into three phases :

**Phase I**

a. The internal situation prevailing within Ankur, and the rapidly deteriorating work environment provided the basic compulsion (or propulsion!) for a series of steps which, although never officially designated as such, were in fact the first phase of our third evaluation.

The executive committee and others *had* to do something, act fast to control matters; therefore two committees were set up, the one leading into the other :

b. i. The Finance Committee.
ii. The Working Committee.

It is significant to note that both these evolved in response to an internal logic and need, *not* because of outside interventions.

NB: The selection process and composition of the Working Committee itself was an interesting exercise in participatory functioning. Area teams and project teams made choices; vertical and horizontal representation was stressed.

**Every aspect of Ankur was under review**

—direction of work
—programme priorities
—geographic spread
—staffing patterns
—salaries
—relationship with other NGOs, government programmes and departments
—structure of organization
—funding sources
—inter-personal relations
—and much else.

1. In short, the need for evaluation was felt at all levels within Ankur.
2. We evolved, almost instinctively, the mechanisms with which to begin the process of evaluation. (NB: The experience of the second evaluation undoubtedly helped create this ability).
3. No outsider was involved in the process at this stage.

**Creating our own guidelines for change and growth**

The Working Committee met over a period of many months and some 15 meetings—and came up with a series of recommendations. These were then shared with all levels of staff and the Executive Committee, as also, the community. Most recommendations were accepted, with some modifications, and incorporated into the new project proposals and budgetary requirements submitted to our funders :

Some outcomes

—cutting down of geographic spread
—induction of community-based workers
—strengthening community organization skills
—identifying permanent communities, as also
—groups within communities with a greater permanence viz. women, youth
—redefining development education project so as to give it a definite community dimension and create linkages with local municipal schools and communities
—recommending phased withdrawal of parent organization, namely Ankur, from an area within a fixed time-frame
—strengthening the concept of team as being central to Ankur's style of functioning
—despite intensive efforts to restructure the entire salary structure, it was felt that in the final analysis the existing salary structure was as just and egalitarian as it was possible to be, and given the outside environment, suitable and fair

### Some factors leading to phase II

i. Information about our internal crisis had naturally been communicated to our chief funder.
ii. Ankur also submitted a budgetary proposal for a further period of three years.
iii. The funding agency nominated their local consultant (the late Vikas Bhai), to intervene and help facilitate a process of reflection and evaluation, prior to taking any decision on future funding.
iv. Vikas Bhai played a major role in enabling the group, not only to survive financially, but, and more important, to retain a sense of confidence in ourselves.

The primary motivation for this phase of the evaluation was most definitely from an outside source—in this case the funding agency.

Possibly this anticipated a development from within the group to likewise initiate such a process as a logical follow-up to the outcome of the working committee's findings.

Important to us was the fact that apart from projecting the need for such an evaluation, we were given total autonomy in setting out the terms of reference, the framework, the guidelines and methodology and in the selection of an acceptable facilitator who could work with the group through the evaluatory process.

The only form of pressure (if indeed it could be called that) was a gentle hint and insistence that we might like to choose a woman in preference to a man as our facilitator. Through many sessions it came home to us—again largely because of Vikas Bhai's perceptiveness and sensitivity, that while Ankur never called itself a women's organization, our image was that of a group composed primarily of women and deeply involved with women's issues. It is perhaps for these reasons that the choice of a woman for this role was appropriate.

This fact takes on an additional significance in the light of later experience which has led us to reflect precisely on this question of gender in participatory evaluation.

### Some preliminary steps

—Meetings with various levels of staff and the Executive Committee to talk about: Why evaluation? Why not?
—Inviting suggestions and exploring suitability of various people for a role of facilitator insider/outsider, known/unknown, pros/cons.
—Three or four names shortlisted, more meetings, and final selection after considering time and other factors.

### More steps

—Working out a broad schedule for evaluation.
—Individual and group discussions at all levels both within Ankur, and with some others such as Bina Agarwal, Rajesh Tandon, who had experience.
—Arriving at a consensus as to methodology.

### Decision

As far as possible we would make this evaluation participatory, non-threatening and enjoyable. This would be an evaluation of programme and not of individual performance.

### Observations

After some initial hesitation and reluctance—people began to feel comfortable with the idea of this evaluation despite the disruption and demands on time. This was partially because of their involvement at every stage of the planning; and largely because of the personality and temperament of the facilitator, who was easy-going, relaxed and fun. At the same time she commanded a respect because of her own professional approach and commitment. She did not impose or dominate in any way. Nor did she come across as threatening or patronizing. Both these are important factors and came out of several informal evaluations of the facilitator.

Therefore does the choice of facilitator/evaluator significantly affect the nature of the evaluatory process? And, if so, how? These become important questions to ponder.

### Some further steps

i. Meetings with entire staff—full and part-timers. Lengthy discussions and explanations.
ii. Why evaluation—whose need? Funders? Ankur? The Community? Individual?
iii. How—Evaluation? Instruments, criteria, interviews, schedule—all to be done by all of us.
iv. Therefore—understanding the nature of participatory techniques in evaluation, and how this process differed from traditional modes and approaches to evaluation.
v. Role of an outside facilitator—balancing the needs of objectivity and sensitivity.
vi. Planning together; dates for meetings with whom?
—The community
—Learners

## THE PROCESS—SOME OUTCOMES

| Positive | Negative |
|---|---|
| • Existing conflicts and tensions were highlighted objectively. This helped resolve them. | • Delay in submission in final report caused avoidable prolonging of tension in Ankur. |
| • Programme weakness and non-functioning were openly acknowledged. | • Submission of the evaluation report in English and lack of Hindi translation at the right time led to unnecessary misunderstandings and misinterpretations, genuine or deliberate. |
| • This led to hard but necessary decisions like closing down of some projects, revamping others. | • Both these above factors accentuated the extraordinary level and nature of adverse often ill-informed criticism, from groups and individuals peripherally or otherwise linked with Ankur's work |
| • Resulted in some members leaving the organization. | |
| • Reinforced and strengthened decision making processes by those authorized to do so. | |

—Part-time teachers
—Full-time staff/coordinator
—Area teams
—Project teams
—Directors
—Executive Committee
—Concerned individuals

vii. Working out the actual questionnaires, interview schedules and criteria of assessment with each appropriate group!

*This process alone took many meetings, many hours!*

### Phase III : Some causative factors

1. The composite outcomes of the entire process comprising Working Committee Report; Evaluation Report; Executive Committee's responses, an overview of all Ankur's projects; and a new budget proposal; all these were finally submitted to the primary funders around October 1986.
2. The funding agency, after an indepth study and analysis of the entire process, approved the proposal in 1987.
3. There had been a gradual easing of tension and strain and insecurity at all levels in Ankur over this period. A new mood of gearing up to more positive and efficient and productive work was evident all round.
4. All these cumulative experiences seemed to have led to a more critical, self-reflective mood at all levels too.
5. The involvement of various levels of personnel in assessing and where possible, revising part of the salary scales upwards, had also called forth and indicated the need for not only ongoing evaluation of programme, but a more critical evaluation of individual performance.

### A schedule of early events

December 1986/January 1987

A series of informal discussions with individuals and groups within Ankur, as well as earlier evaluators.

February 3, 1987

Performance evaluation discussed formally at staff meeting. After sharing reactions and some reservations, a suggestion made and accepted to call in Dr Rajesh Tandon from PRIA to facilitate a day-long discussion on "Why individual evaluation? Can this be a non-threatening and participatory exercise?"

*Even this step of inviting someone to facilitate a discussion on evaluation* did *give rise to misgivings among some as to the inherent biases of 'experts' and 'outsiders'* per se.

**February 13, 1987**

Day-long event—indepth discussion on several aspects of evaluation—based on an initial presentation by Dr Rajesh Tandon of PRIA, wherein several issues were raised; questions and doubts answered; fears allayed. General agreement on decision to go ahead with performance evaluation.

Small groups set up to work out the final format of questionnaires based on framework of criteria and other details as discussed and agreed at the large group session.

## Sharing what happened

### The agony and the ecstasy

—Never before had we been through a process where we told each other things that we felt about each other, so openly, in a group, face to face... it was hard at first, but it felt good...

—We remember the agony of deciding what score to give each one... If I marked my colleague low on openness, would she do the same to me? How would it affect my final grading?

—Even more tough—to find rational, cogent and well founded reasons to support our marking in front of a whole group. We could no longer take shelter in remaining anonymous... felt insecure too...

—Sharing the anguish of a senior woman like Shanta Devi—one of our oldest teachers—today a senior co-ordinator—gritty and hardworking; a first-rate field worker, but unable to cope with the world of abstractions and concepts. Each time a low score was given to Shanta Devi by any of us, her colleagues, her friends, it was a blow to her whole being, her self-esteem, and her assessment of herself.

—Too many questions and dilemmas. Were we utterly cruel and heartless? Was all this really necessary?

—Can we dare to tell our 'director didi' what we don't like about her and not fear for our jobs?

Slowly, very slowly, people began to see what this kind of evaluation was all about... Began to enjoy it...

—It was such a good feeling to be able to point out each other's weaknesses and faults without feeling a sense of guilt...

—We all cried together with Shanta Devi; but oh! the exhilaration when she finally began to understand that by marking her low on openness it did not mean that we were biased against her...

—It took time, but we all learned to make statements about each other only after serious reflection and analysis.

—Till now we had tended to talk behind each other's backs—it was so much better to say it face to face...

—We learnt to *trust* one another, or at least we realized that in order to work as a *team*, it was necessary to learn to trust...

—We were also helped to see that when scores were allocated on so many levels—from self, to peer group, to community and to directors, and then averages taken, this was about as objective a scoring method as it was possible to get...

—Most important—When, by mutual agreement halfway through the individual evaluation we decided that we would not link the results of this evaluation with salaries and increments—we began to see much more clearly that this *was* indeed *our* evaluation—we owned it as it were—and therefore it was not to be feared.

### The doubts and fears—the blocks and problems—the questions

—'People' say that this will be used against us—to throw us out. What about our jobs?

—Other groups say they only do verbal evaluations—they don't have to go around filling up forms. Why did we have a written and a verbal evaluation. What does it prove? Which one is better?

—We belong to a joint project—and this means we are being evaluated twice—once by them and a second time now. That is nor fair!

—Too many meetings—is it really necessary to go through all this for an evaluation? The community work, our classes are suffering? How can we explain it to them?

—Despite all our efforts, it has not really been possible to convince the community, nor to really get a proper evaluation from them. They continue to say nice things—but we don't really know what they think about us. Maybe we need to work with them to be more critical?

—Can people really be honest in evaluation?

—Should not we be doing evaluations continuously—and not just once or twice?

## Some lessons learnt—insights gained

1. It's interesting that evaluation can be of so many different kinds—stated and unstated, overt and covert. In our entire evaluation—the formal evaluation—there has been no mention of the problems that we were facing with one of our collaborative projects. And yet, over the whole period of 1987, we held about a dozen meetings, many small group informal sessions during which we talked, we argued, we clarified, and finally decided that it would be better to work separately. Wasn't that also a process of evaluation?
2. The overall feeling today, is that the entire exercise has left us feeling *positive* and *good* about ourselves and our work. We are not feeling bruised or left with damaged self images. And if we can look back and laugh at the tensions and setbacks during the process of evaluation, it *must* mean that everyone *was* genuinely involved at every stage—and therefore it *was* participatory.
3. In our own ways, we have all individually and collectively realized that PE is not a static, time-bound exercise; rather we are seeing it as a *continuum*—a dynamic process where each phase is linked by an internal logic to what went before, and in turn creates the need for the subsequent phase.
4. While working on this very presentation—we have identified some of the steps we need to take so that what we share here will be further communicated to all levels of those who work together—and again, in a medium that does not restrict itself to the written word alone.

## In conclusion

This entire process that we at Ankur have gone through has left us with two overwhelming feelings about Participatory Evaluation.

### 1. The 'gender factor' in evaluation

Do women use the tool of evaluation in a different way from men? How does this difference manifest itself? What is its impact on efficiency? On objectivity? On productivity?

The question is being raised here because, as mentioned earlier, our attention was drawn to this at the very beginning, in the choice of a woman as facilitator in Phase II of the Third Evaluation. It has been reinforced by our most recent experience during the period of individual evaluations—where we constantly found ourselves giving the time and the attention to so many of the special problems that women face in the area of work and performance; their daily dilemmas of coping with the dual responsibilities of home, children, demanding husbands or mothers-in-law, as well as the strenuous and occasionally uncompromising demands of the workplace. And yet, we believe that by and large this sensitivity to the personal factor, did not substantially affect the objectivity of evaluation.

### 2. Participatory evaluation as a human process

Quite instinctively as a group we found ourselves responding more gently in situations where we were all aware that the one being evaluated had been through some personal trauma.

Does this only happen in Participatory Evaluation? Can this find a place in other forms of evaluation?

### 3. Humanizing the other

Leading from the above two observations—a third question— What if any attempts have been made for traditional and participatory modes of evaluation to interact, and if possible for Participatory Evaluation to help humanize the other?

### 4. The real strength

Finally—we have become aware of something that we can only term an inbuilt dialectic process in Participatory Evaluation and which is its real strength. It pushes each individual, and through them, the group—to develop the critical and analytical capacity. This can only enrich both individual and collective functioning leading ultimately to qualitatively better action.

ANKUR, ALARIPPU: LALITA, LAKSHMI, MARTHA, JAYA... AND ALL THE OTHERS WITHOUT WHOM THIS PROCESS, THESE REFLECTIONS WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE.

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# RURAL HEALTH PROJECT
# Maharashtra, India

## I. History of the organization

A rural health project which started in 1977, now covers 22 villages (total population 38,000) in two tehsils of a progressive district in Maharashtra. It is known as one of the pioneering work in introducing Primary Health Care approach. The very objective of this project is "to develop a system of comprehensive health care through primary health care approach with emphasis on community participation".

The village people are selected and trained to work as voluntary health workers to act as an interface between the community and the health infrastructure through health care institutions such as sub-centres, health centres, rural hospital and a full-fledged hospital at district level. The entire project involves 40 community health volunteers, 15 multi-purpose workers (employed by zila parishads and deputed to this project), 10 supervisors and administrative staff and three directors at the top as policy makers.

The supervisors and administrative heads monitor the functioning closely by explaining the work schedule and taking feedback about completion of the target, through a monthly meeting. The patients are being identified, diagnosed and treated or if found complicated referred to hospital and specialists, medicines are being distributed, children are being regularly immunized, anti-natal cases enrolled and followed up, family planning methods are propagated and operations are conducted. And all these cases are increasing in number every year. Various studies have also proved that there is a significant increase in the health status of village people in the project area, evidenced by fall in crude death rate, infant mortality rate as well as improvement in mother and child health and family planning services including immunization.

The project has been in operation for over a decade now, but the above assessment of the functioning has been done only by the policy-makers and the administrative heads and that also of only health measures. The social, educational aspects of the project are not assessed. The community and the community health volunteers are not consulted to measure the impact of the functioning of the project.

Following are the three crucial objectives of the project and of primary health care approach. Being concerned about these and realizing the need of achieving these the administrators, the policy-makers of the project thought of taking opinion of the community about it. These objectives are:

a. Participation of community in delivery of health services.

b. Increase in health awareness of village people.

c. Replicability of the model used in this project elsewhere.

These three objectives are discussed, analysed and stressed on further planning and extension of the project, only at policy and administrative level, and are found to be incomplete. On this background, the idea of Participatory Evaluation proposed by Association for Applied Social Research was found appropriate and was operationalized at once.

Thus there was no history of participatory evaluation, nor of any practice or platform to call for collective thinking and review of the project. In fact, the concept of evaluation was "data-collection on various health indices".

## II. Objectives of the participatory evaluation

Following specific objectives of evaluation were defined in consultation with the policy makers of the project, which are based on their perception and vision of the project, and outlined their expectations from the evaluation.

1. To find out whether the community has acquired adequate health awareness by the intervention of the project staff. Do they find this awareness useful? What other information and knowledge is gained by the community from the services of the project and how are they benefited by that?

2. To identify the factors which motivate the community to avail of and accept the health and other services of the project.

3. To study how far the community is motivated, trained, prepared and given scope to participate in the functioning of the rural health project. What are the obsta-

cles in their participation? What are the drawbacks and strengths of their active participation in the project?

4. To make recommendations to strengthen effective community participation in the project.

Additional objectives for evaluation were expected to emerge from discussions with field functionaries—CHVs and MPWs, and the community, while involving their participation in the evaluation process.

## III. Methodology and process of participatory evaluation, as it was initially planned

The policy makers of the project had stressed the point that they wanted to know the community's perception about the project. Hence the participation of community and CHVs is underlined in each phase of the evaluation process.

### Phase I : Preparation

It was proposed that a survey, a comprehensive examination of people's attitude towards Rural Health Project by gathering first-hand data is conducted initially to acquaint ourselves (external evaluation assistants) with the functioning and background of the project. This also should be supplemented by secondary data of the studies already conducted. The focus of the survey was to cover following questions:

1. How does the community perceive the role of CHVs, MPWs, ANMs, Medical Officers, and of the apex institutions?
2. What problems are perceived by the community in general and beneficiary of the project in specific, in the functioning of the project?
3. What were and are the expectations of the community from the project? How far these are met?
4. What are the community's suggestions for improvement in the PHC approach and the project functioning and what role they are prepared to play in it?

The objectives of this phase were set as to

a. establish rapport with functionaries and community;
b. identify and define the problems (if any) perceived by the community in the project;
c. involve the community in participatory evaluation;
d. select key individuals from the community to focus core evaluation team.

This phase was expected to be of three months.

### Phase II : Intervention

Having identified issues for evaluation and individuals who will participate in it, the actual evaluation process was to begin in this phase. The methods and focus of evaluation in this phase were to be determined based on the experience and outcome of Phase I. Broadly they were jotted down as:

a. to highlight the strengths of this project.
b. to find out the root causes of the problems/obstacles/difficulties perceived by the community and project staff in three aspects (namely community and project participation, health awareness, and replicability of the project) which form the focus of the evaluation;
c. to list the suggestions made by all those involved in evaluation to achieve better results in the above mentioned three aspects of the project;
d. to critically evaluate attempts to bring about improvements by the individuals in the community and project personnel; and to prepared action plans to overcome the obstacles and improve the effectiveness of the project.

These objectives would have been fulfilled by either

- —conducting indepth interviews of the selected individuals in the community and in the project personnel; or/and
- —organizing group discussions of the individuals in the community and in the project personnel both separately and combined; or/and
- —organizing workshops, overnight camps of key individuals in the community, other voluntary groups such as Mahila Mandals, other social workers in the area, as well as project personnel and Zila Parishad staff.

It was assumed that some other suitable methods may have to be selected to cover the above listed objectives depending on the response choice of village community.

This phase was expected to continue for a minimum of six months.

**Phase III : Report writing**

Though a day-to-day process record was to be maintained and periodical reports to be prepared for discussions with coordinators of the project; the final report of this participatory evaluation was to be written both in English for policy-makers and in Marathi for the community.

## IV. Methodology and process of participatory evaluation as it emerged

The elaborate design described in earlier pages did not materialize all that smoothly. Following steps were planned and taken to invite and respect the participation of community and other functionaries, who formed the evaluation team:

1. First of all, the team of external individuals participating in evaluation (from Association for Applied Social Research) visited all the villages till they got acquainted with all and the functionaries became aware of the background of the project.
2. Secondly, in group discussions that followed the visits (in each village and combined for all the villages together), it was confirmed that the need for evaluation is strongly felt, before starting actual process of evaluation.
3. Thirdly, a core team of evaluators was formed to take basic decisions and collect data like what should be the focus of evaluation, methods of evaluations, in which villages intensive evaluation should take place and why, etc.
4. Fourthly, all the members of the evaluation team were assured that the confidentiality of their information would be kept and still the evaluation would be seriously brought to the attention of policy-makers for action.
5. Though it may sound simplistic, in the context of this particular setting following action implications also proved to be useful in creating atmosphere and emerged participation, like
   a. keeping the time given for them in the meeting which was unlike the other meetings of the project;
   b. reaching the remote areas despite the unavailability of transport facility, whenever it was jointly decided;
   c. deciding time, date and venue according to the convenience of community and community health volunteers;
   d. sitting along with them on the floor in a circle;
   e. using local examples for illustrations etc.

All these actions did result in spontaneous response, initiative in organizing and attending group discussions, uninhibited analysis and even expression of willingness to face negative consequences if it meant action for solving the problems in the project. The rapport got established so fast that after field visits the community and functionaries both felt that Phase I as it was planned can be combined with Phase II. In fact after the field visits it was only through intensive weeklong discussions that all the objectives of evaluation were covered (except about the replicability) and there was no need of interviews or survey. The flexibility of approach itself gave scope to participation and they did feel having control over the process.

The entire process of evaluation took only half the scheduled time.

## V. Outcome of evaluation

Since the project is still incomplete for the reason of confidentiality it is not possible to give the analysis and recommendations which emerged out of the evaluation in detail in this paper. But in brief.

1. A list of problems at
   a. community level
   b. community health volunteers level
   c. MPW level
   d. supervisory level and
   e. policy level was prepared.
2. The root causes behind these problems and their interconnections were traced.
3. A strong need for change in the project implementation and in attitudes and approaches of administrative and supervisory level personnel was expressed.
4. And before proceeding any further the CHVs and MPWs demanded immediate action on the problems expressed by them.

When the policy-makers and administrative head were informed about the above need and demand, they did not accept the evaluation and have at present suspended evaluation project.

The community and CHVs nevertheless are interested in following up the evaluation.

Some specific follow-up plans are also indicated to the policy-makers.

## VI. Impact of evaluation

As a result of evaluation process as expressed by them

a. The community health volunteers realized the importance of their role in the infrastructure.

b. They felt confident of analysing and expressing their problems and a meaning in doing this.

c. At one point there was also a hope raised in them that the problems would be solved, which—due to delay in response from the administrators and foreclosure of the evaluation project—they are losing now.

d. They are thinking of alternative projects to sustain their roles as voluntary workers if it means being thrown out by this project or resigning from it themselves.

e. The supervisors and administrators have begun to understand the interconnection of the problems and its relation with their role in a new perspective, that is of those for whom the project began i.e. the community, and of those who work in the field.

f. The supervisors and administrators have also tried to suppress the evaluation, when they realized the potential threat to the very existence of the project.

As a result of a negative feeling collectively expressed by the field functionaries, the discomforts felt and a realization of potential to work in this field, they have already begun to think in terms of independently approaching funders for similar health projects. The leadership has also emerged. And at present there is a possibility of organization-building.

## VII. Issues in participatory evaluation

As an external agent in the participatory process, one has felt the limitations as well as strengths of this role. But whenever the conflicts between the levels of hierarchy in the organization come to the surface of evaluation the external agent is puzzled. If the administrators themselves have invited the external agent and they are being exposed in the process by field functionaries and the community, the situation becomes awkward for the external agent. After all the evaluation is also a paid-for activity by them and if they withdraw infrastructural support (like transport, meeting place etc.), the external agent finds it difficult to sustain only on the goodwill for people and development.

SEEMA KHOT

# RURAL DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION
## Madhya Pradesh, India

Rural Development Organization (RDO) is one of those organizations which began their work in the mid seventies with a focus on conscientization and organization of socially and economically deprived and exploited sections of the society. Major thrust of their initial work was "Voice to Voiceless" and "Power to the Powerless". RDO started its work in 1975 through one field centre in five villages in one of the most backward districts of Madhya Pradesh. In 1979-80, it established two other field centres and in 1984, it once again expanded into new areas.

In fact 1975-1979, 1979-1984 and 1985 onwards are three distinct phases in the lifecycle of RDO. During each of these phases, several internal and external evaluations of RDO took place, and a considerable amount of written material on its strategy, philosophy and programmes are available. It has come to be recognized in India and outside as a trendsetter organization for operationalizing conscientization and organization model. With a successful campaign of political education and building up of people's organization in the field centres' areas during the first two phases (i.e., 1975-1984) it has not only expanded its work in 350 villages, but has also added some socio-economic and health programmes alongwith people's organization. Introduction of socio-economic programmes in the third phase, has started having some repercussions on the organizational functioning and work culture.

At this juncture in a meeting of RDO representatives and representatives of all major funders of RDO, it was felt that if through a process of participatory evaluation a perspective and organizational strategy for the next 10 years could be evolved it would help in doing programme planning and thus facilitate composite funding for 10 years. In this meeting with mutual agreement between RDO and its donors on the above need, an agreement was also reached on the names of three potential agencies in India, one of which could play a facilitator role for the proposed process of participatory evaluation.

By the time follow-up actions were taken on the agreements of this meeting and potential agencies were contacted, RDO had faced some problem from the government and restrictions were put on RDO on receiving funds, its records were sealed by government officials and enquiries were set up. It had intensified the already brewing tension in the organization caused by the strains on organizational functioning and conflicts of work culture in its third phase, but due to the uncertainty created by new crisis most of the people in the organization were keeping their fingers crossed, when the first planning meeting was organized between the intervening agency and the senior staff of RDO. The planning meeting was attended by a team from intervening agency, representatives of other partners of RDO, a tentative representative of donors and senior staff of RDO. Apart from setting-up objectives of the proposed evaluation and developing the frame of reference, a detailed time schedule was also prepared. The objectives of evaluation derived in this meeting are as follows :—

i. To assess the model followed by RDO as a mechanism for people's empowerment;

ii. To assess the relevance of different programmes in this model; and

iii. To assess the appropriateness of the organizational form of RDO.

## The process

With the above objectives in mind, it was felt that evaluation should focus on the experiences of the model followed by RDO as a model of development (i.e., conscientization organization model) and examine RDO's programme and organizational structures in that light. Thus, the essential thrust of the evaluation was not on assessing impact on beneficiaries, but on the viability and applicability of the model and its appropriate supportive structures.

At the end of the meeting, some questions were raised regarding the suitability of timing

for the proposed evaluation process in the light of the crisis RDO was facing. After careful thinking based on the assessment of RDO staff present at the meeting, it was decided that the evaluation team will visit selected field areas and discuss the basic tenets of participatory evaluation with responsible area staff members and carry the evaluation process forward, taking stock of their reactions.

As per this understanding the evaluation teams visited the areas and held meetings with area staff. These meetings were quite useful in terms of creating confidence among the staff members to candidly assess the need of participatory evaluation and the appropriateness of timing in conducting the same. In the course of deliberations, it became clear that staff was unmoved by the present crisis and was ready to join in the evaluation if their participation is ensured till the finalization of the report and planning of follow-up actions.

Some of the staff considered the proposed evaluation as an exercise to merely satisfy the formalities of the donors and their organizations. They said that this consideration was based on their past experiences when they neither saw the reports, nor saw any actions flowing out, of earlier evaluations. However, with repeated assurances of discussing the draft report with them before finalizing it, the evaluation team could win-over their confidence in some places; and in other places, some staff still held their doubts and wanted to assess the credibility of the evaluation team. This visit of the evaluation team was thus quite fruitful in creating an environment for carrying out the evaluation process.

After discussing these impressions with the Executive Director and the Acting Executive Director, it was decided to go ahead with the process. The dates for the next visit of different members of the evaluation team were finalized and informed to the Acting Executive Director, who was made incharge of coordinating the work with the evaluation team.

During the second visit, as per schedule the scenario had drastically changed. All the persons from RDO concerned with the evaluation process were not available. One of the evaluation team member proceeded to the area as per schedule on her own, and interviewed some of the staff. Another member reached afterwards but could not break much ground because of the prevailing state of confusion due to legal crisis still facing RDO, coupled with flood relief task and some dynamics in organization unknown to the evaluation team till then. Perhaps, the dynamics was escalating faster due to prevailing uncertainty in the organization. After prolonged discussion with the Acting Director the next visits were planned and an assurance was given for all arrangements to be made for extensive field programme of the evaluation team.

In the meantime the resource person involved in facilitating the evaluation process for social forestry programme had fixed a meeting of concerned staff in order to initiate the process. The internal conflicts and dynamics among senior RDO staff somehow stalled the process from moving further and the concerned resource person was forced to withdraw from the evaluation process.

The interesting point at this juncture was that most of the responsible people in RDO were neither ready to take the stand to suspend the process of evaluation nor were they feeling comfortable in its progressing since they were not able to assess the possible outcomes of the exercise and its impact. With everybody overtly accepting the importance of participatory evaluation exercise, promising all cooperation in future activity and apologetically regretting futility of the last two visits, it became a catch-22 situation for the team of the interventing agency. The agency could neither back out from the exercise on its own initiative nor do anything to expedite the process. "Wait and watch" was the only line of action left to deal with the situation.

In order to keep the record straight, the Acting Director of RDO was reminded of the coming visit of the team along with his assurances and two formats seeking some information.

## Strains on the process

On the arrival of evaluation team, for scheduled visit, to its utter surprise the team was told that the process of evaluation was suspended at the instance of the donors as they want the process to continue only in the presence of their representatives. No information to this effect was sent to the interventing agency. On making queries, it was revealed that the decision to suspend the evaluation was made a week before this visit of the team, but for reasons unknown till today, it was not communicated to the facilitating agency.

This belated reaction of the representatives of donors on the issue of frame of reference and on the participation of donors further confounded the already prevailing air of mistrust and confusion within RDO regarding this evaluation. In fact, this intervention leading to the postponement of the evaluation process, had severely affected the basic fabric of participation based on mutual respect and trust among the concerned parties. The displeasure of the facilitating agency was duly communicated to all concerned parties.

## Revelation of agendas

After a lapse of two months a meeting was organized to sort out the misunderstanding among the concerned parties. But the meeting turned out to be an exercise of revealing the purposes of evaluation which were not made explicit till then. The issue of the appropriateness of time being conducive for evaluation of RDO was not raised by anyone but only the issue of donors' participation with the evaluation team during field visits for data-collection was raised. The arguments given in support of the donors' participation in the whole process of evaluation implied that if evaluation is done in their absence, it would not be worthy enough to convince the Board of Directors of donor organization and the philanthropic organizations behind them. This problem of convincing the Board of Directors of donors and philanthropic organizations behind them was neither mentioned as one of the objectives of the proposed evaluation during the consultation nor was communicated prior to this meeting.

The facilitating agency was taken by surprise on this matter and took a stand in this meeting that the involvement of the donor and philanthropic organizations in evaluation exercise at this stage and in the prevailing situation in RDO can be accepted till the level of headquarters and at the stage of planning and finalizing the process only. The facilitating agency made it clear in this meeting that it had agreed to take up this task because the objectives of evaluation implied assisting RDO to take stock of its past experiences and to plan for the future and because of the mutual trust reposed in the agency by RDO and donor organizations. Opening up of new frontiers at this late stage had belied both the premises of the involvement of facilitating agency. At the same time the facilitating agency was not interested in withdrawing the helping hand to a fraternal organization when it was under attack from the government. This dilemma was finally resolved by a compromise. It was decided in the meeting that the donors will send their team separately, which will be joined by some representatives of philanthropic organizations and some others. The findings will be shared with the facilitating agency. Somehow the deadlock was removed through this compromise.

## New phase

Sensing the problems caused by the six month long postponement, and the developments within the organization caused by external pressures and interal dynamics, the facilitating team decided to prepare questionnaires for different levels of staff, village council members and formats for programme and village council profiles. The team had also prepared guidelines for indepth study of selected village councils. In effect the team had changed its method of collecting information from group discussion; collective and individual reflection (which were used in first phase of evaluation) to relatively more structured methods of information collection.

But when the team reached RDO, it was confronted with a new situation once again. In the briefing from the Executive Director, the team was told to stretch the period of evaluation since the retrenchment of animators/teachers had created new tension in the organization. The team was told that teachers were given compensation according to rule and asked to leave and as a result of dissatisfaction caused by such an action they were spreading rumours among the people. The Executive Director felt that in such a situation, the information the team collected might be coloured.

At this stage the team explained to him that during this visit we had planned to concentrate on collecting information from the staff only and would not be holding group discussions with council members and other villagers. With this understanding, we proceeded to the field. During the teams' encounter with the staff, with whom the team had developed good rapport initially, the team was asked lots of questions regarding the validity of the present process of evaluation in the context of happenings of the last few months. They were also doubtful about the *locus standi* of the team on the basis of their observations during the visit of donors' team. They put forward straight questions to the team by asking about assurance of implementation of recommendations made by this evaluation, even if they cooperated with it. This was quite a

learning experience for the team in terms of understanding the limitations of the evaluation.

The deliberations with the staff members revealed that lots of actions were being initiated by those managing RDO regarding which the facilitating team had been kept in dark. Such actions on the part of the management of RDO had changed the environment in the organization. There was polarization around the issue of termination of teachers and reorganization proposed by the management. Most of the staff were only interested in discussing these issues and proposed a general meeting for that purpose.

The state of the RDO at this stage was characterized by serious internal conflicts among senior staff and Executive Director, extreme mutual mistrust, strategizing and counter-strategizing between warring parties.

Hence in this trip as well, the team could carry out its scheduled work for four days only while rest of the five days the team simply observed the highly charged activity around the proposed meeting. Though this forced observation exercise was quite a learning experience for the team in terms of developing insights into the internal dynamics and decision making process of the organization, and it was an important input to the evaluation exercise, but as a consequence, the team's renewed attempts for systematic data-collection became a casuality once again.

At this stage, the evaluation team felt a bit frustrated and doubtful about the intentions of the concerned parties regarding completion of this exercise. The team raised the issue with concerned persons and requested them to raise the issue in the forthcoming RDO governing body meeting and let the facilitating agency know the stand of the organization at the earliest. The team proposed to hold a meeting of all senior and important staff of RDO to discuss the present state of affairs. The team felt that such a meeting, apart from being an exercise to provide closure to the evaluation process, might also help in overcoming the state of stalemate faced by the organization then and temporarily manage the conflicts.

On getting a green signal from them, such a meeting was finally held which took some critical decisions to phase out the then crisis the organization was faced with.

The above description gives an idea of stresses and strains which had an effect on realizing the expected levels of participation of staff in the evaluation process and the originally planned expected objectives of evaluation. This account of events also brings out the limitations of the outside facilitating agency in sustaining a participatory evaluation process.

Based on the information collected in this process a detailed report was prepared and presented at a meeting, which was attended by 40 persons including RDO governing body members, senior and important staff of RDO and evaluation team members. Summary observations of that report are given below:

## Overall observations

1. According to the original vision of RDO, it was expected to distinguish between the organization committed to the promotion of people's movement and the people's organization created through its efforts. Such a conceptualization is visible in the initial documents, but it seems that this distinction got lost somewhere.

   This appears to be the *main issue* affecting the growth of village councils as stronger people's organizations, effectiveness of programmes, and confusions regarding organizational structure and functioning at different levels. Over the years, *the distinction between village councils as people's movement and RDO as a promotion organization got blurred.* As a result, people's representatives and forums above cluster level got intermixed with RDO area staff; animators originally developed as leaders from village councils became identified, and treated as RDO staff; the strengthening of people's organization, and appropriate structures for the same, at a broader level, beyond an area, could not take place. Many animators and other staff began to equate RDO central office with the central decision-making forum of the people.

   It is this blurring of distinction that needs to be critically looked into and immediately clarified. Many other actions can follow from the same.

2. This has led to *cooption of people's leadership developed through investment of a lot of energy, resources, and time into the formal structure of an organization performing promotional role.* Such induction of people's leaders in institutional structure has perhaps not only created dual

aspirations among such staff but also helped nurture misunderstanding among village council members. The duality of aspirations had further affected the internal dynamics of the organization.

On the one hand, village council animators and cluster coordinators were acting as spokes-persons of the people's organization; on the other hand, they were subjected to, and became socialized into, RDO organizational structure and style of functioning within the overall context.

Many of these persons experience tensions and conflicts within themselves around this duality; and, act on that confusion leading to inter-mingling of roles—acting as people's representatives in staff meetings and as RDO staff in village council and cluster meetings.

3. Rapid programmatic and geographic expansion of RDO activities in its third phase further accentuated this situation. The demands for such expansion implied transfer of senior and experienced staff to start work in new areas, recruitment of technical and professional staff, and a large number of new field staff. This expansion appears to have not been planned very well and as a result *necessary orientation and integration of new staff could not take place.* The new phase, third phase of RDO activities could not be comprehended by new staff within the historical context of the earlier two phases. And old staff equipped to function effectively in those previous phases could not be reoriented to take on the responsibilities of the new phase.

   The growth of RDO apparently less than fully planned, further sharpened internal and external contradictions and conflicts.

4. *The organizational and personnel management style evolved during the process of working in a relatively smaller area with focus on conscientization, organization, and action was not reviewed and changed to adjust to the requirements of a large organization taking up development programmes also.* Even the older staff was not prepared or trained in planning, proposal developing, monitoring etc.

   The structures of decision-making, participation, mutual interaction and consultation that were appropriate during the previous phases were no longer fully relevant in the changed context. Similarly, planning, budgeting and control systems, previously appropriate, did not get revised in light of the new demands of tasks and people.

5. The strategy adapted to cope with the new programmes in expansion phase was to introduce the technical team model. Such a change in structure in a social organization needs to be carefully discussed so that the people involved could internalize it and it contributes to enhancing the effectiveness of the organization. Somehow it seems there is a lack of clarity about the objectives of such an important change in structure.

   As it is explained in some of the documents, the reason for such a change was dual in nature, i.e., to deal with the growing regional feeling and to cope with the skill development requirement of new thrust. The new result was resistance from the people and older staff in Areas. This change could be fully effected in only one among the three old Areas, and another Area developed a *via media* of maintaining people's structure alongwith the technical team model.

   The changes brought about in this structure appear to have contributed to the further blurring of the boundary between people's organization and promotional organization. The new demands perhaps necessitated changes in RDO staff structure, but the net effect was change in peoples' organizational structure.

6. The major impact of such a change was on horizontal communication among people's bodies, which seems essential for consolidation of people's movement. With the introduction of the technical team model, no natural form is left for the village council members of one village to meet their counterparts from another village in the same cluster/Area at their own initiative. The only communication channel left open is that through RDO staff. This has placed the responsibility of running and consolidating people's organization on RDO without much participation of people's leaders.

Another effect of this change was felt on those who were village council members in past and were first made animators and then regional coordinators, or on those who were village council leaders first and then coopted as regional coordinators. These people, when asked to acquire some or the other skill in order to change their role to a technical team member, found it difficult to cope with it in a short span of time available. As a result, it appears to have overloaded them in terms of coverage; also it did not match their personal goals based on dual aspirations referred to earlier. The resistance caused by this process of change has affected the functioning of the organization. This has also led to mistrust and suspicion among the staff at different levels, and polarization of different categories of people in RDO and village councils.

7. The organizational and personnel management style referred to earlier, in the highly polarized and changed context of these developments, led to a decline of democratic norms of organizational functioning. The role of a few committees left with people's representatives, i.e., steering committees, in decision-making gradually declined. The decision-making powers, for all practical purposes, got concentrated at the top. Detailed information regarding planned proposals and budgets initially used to be taken to the village council and discussed in order to set up democratic norms in the organization. They had stopped even reaching the staff now. This style of management developed in all aspects, including personnel, financial, administrative and inter-personal aspects.

Most of the Area coordinators have also tried to imitate the same style in their Areas, which has made things worse. The only mode of information flow developed due to such a style if reflecting a "closed door policy", wherein the policy makers knew the various related issues, while all others were in dark. As things stand now, the flow of information has become very restricted and personalized. This has also contributed to speculation, rumour, distortion, and inter-personal mistrust and distancing. The prevailing system of information flow and decision-making could not cope with changing demands of the new phase, and over-centralization became the response to the resulting chaos and confusion.

The development of various economic and social programmes did not occur on the explicit premise of continuously strengthening people's organization and movement. As a result, many economic and skill building programmes have been initiated in such a manner and at such pace that the promotional role of RDO (in conscientization and mobilization) got gradually replaced by service-provider role.

The loan programme, in particular, became the focal point of village councils, and its expansion, as opposed to that of village council membership and strength, took precedence. Evolution and use of various socio-economic programmes in support of strengthening people's organization and movement somehow got diffused. And, as a result, programmes became the primary task, not the village councils and their higher level structures.

The programme got conceived and implemented in all the Areas—old and new—almost uniformly, without reference to specific requirements and needs of a particular village council, region or Area. The stereotyping of programming had further reduced the possibility of utilizing the programme to strengthen people's organization.

In sum, RDO experience demonstrates the viability, and even desirability, of building people's organization, and village councils as their base structures. The programmes and structures of RDO promotion organization need to be distinguished from the people's organization and movement. It is in rearticulation, and consequent reformation, of this strategy that the future direction of people's organization and RDO as a promotional organization should be attempted.

These observations were discussed at length during the meeting and there was a general agreement on all the points. It was resolved in that meeting to translate the whole report in Hindi and discuss it at various levels in the organization. Planning of the actions to be taken was differed in this light, to be done after the discussion.

The intervening agency did not receive any communication after this, hence its role came to an end at this stage.

This experience brings out a number of issues related to the understanding of participatory evaluation. These issues on one hand highlight some essential points to be followed in a participatory evaluation exercise and on the other illuminate some limitations of participatory evaluation. We are attempting to put down some of these issues here for the purpose of further discussion.

## Issues

1. Explicit statement of objectives of a pro posed participatory evaluation exercise by all the concerned parties (constituencies) related to the organization's work is essential for carrying out the participatory process. Any room for possible reinterpretation of objectives in between or imposition of new objectives by one or a few parties alone is bound to hamper the participatory process. Hence, it is better to initially spend some more time in setting the objectives, explanation and interpretation of each objective etc. with all concerned parties, in order to ensure uninterrupted participatory process later on.

2. Working out a detailed "memorandum of understanding" type document acceptable to all concerned is also essential, however, bureaucratic it may sound on the face of it. Such an understanding may entail roles and responsibilities of each party and individuals involved in participatory evaluation exercise from each party. It may also incorporate understanding regarding communication of all important decisions taken in the organization during the time of participatory evaluation exercise to all concerned. On the whole, based on the merits of the case in hand, it may incorporate all those details regarding the understanding among concerned constituencies which have potentials of distorting or interrupting the participatory process.

   This practice is quite common in sectors other than ours. Due to our utter dislike for structured and formal functioning we tend to generally ignore working meticulously on this aspect. Since, most organizations in our sector also operate in a multiple constituency system and the participatory evaluation process entails involvement of most of the constituencies the organization deals with, it is always better to create a clarity of understanding at the outset. The elements of misunderstanding, mistrust and confusion among the concerned constituencies cropping up in between the process defeat the whole purpose; hence it is essential for us to come to terms with this bit of formalism. Our experiences in recent years indicate a welcome trend of organizations initiating participatory evaluation on their own, without anybody asking them. This trend needs to be encouraged further.

3. Another issue relates to strings attached or stakes involved in evaluation for the organization and its impact on participatory evaluation. The participatory evaluation is an exercise of critical reflection leading to strengthening the vision, organization and programmes. The situation of no strings attached or no stakes involved will doubtlessly be the ideal situation for such critical reflections. But in practice such ideal situations often do not exist. Hence the participatory evaluation faces the challenge of coming to terms with or coping with the situation of a few strings attached or some stakes involved in any proposed exercise. The experience shows that the two points mentioned above, regarding explicit statement of objectives, and formulating memorandum of understanding, do help in coping with such challenge. It was found that such efforts may yield desired result at the top level of the organization which on its own do not percolate down to various levels. Hence some cautious, deliberate and effective efforts need to be built in the process itself; so that the restricting effect of stakes in evaluation on the process of critical reflection could be minimized at all levels of the organization and among all constituencies involved.

4. The environment in the organization is another issue of concern in the context of participatory evaluation. The case presented here had an organizational environment of tension and mistrust which got polarized during the process of evaluation due to external factors and leadership response to those factors. Experience in this case and some other cases shows that in such a situation the process of participa-

tory evaluation can be very helpful in coping with the situation if the organization's functioning was non-bureaucratic and organization's structure was non-hierarchical. But in a hierarchical and bureaucratic organization even in normal circumstances it becomes difficult to carry out a participatory process. Though it is hard to say at this stage whether it is a strength or weakness of participatory methodology, but certainly coping with the inherited resistance of bureaucratic and hierarchial system is a challenge which we face in varying degrees in various experiences.

5. If we agree that for any participatory evaluation exercise, it is essential to result in action for change, the issue of organization's 'willingness to act' becomes very important. In the absence of such a will, even a participatory exercise will tend to become a routine; particularly if it deals with organizational issue of perspective, structures and work culture etc. The action for change in this context amounts to organizational development intervention and thus, even the role of intervening agency becomes crucial. So the willingness and readiness of the organization and acceptance and competence of intervening agency holds the key for such desired organizational development intervention.

In a participatory evaluation exercise, choice of appropriate techniques of data/information collection is another crucial area. Perhaps the rationale for choice of techniques should be promoting involvement of the people at various levels of the organization's work. This makes it imperative that choice for differential levels has to be different. The selected technique has to be conducive for the level it is going to be used at. Hence, flexibility in choice of technique is detrimental for a successful participatory process.

This requirement places extra demands on the facilitating team of having command over all the techniques, so that it could use appropriate ones, whenever and wherever required.

ANIL K CHAUDHARY

# OFADEC, Senegal

## Introduction

In December 1980, I was recruited by the Office Africain pour le Developpement et la Cooperation (OFADEC) for coordinating the activities of their training department at the level of village cooperatives which the said NGO was carrying out in the eastern part of Senegal. At the same time, six other fresh university graduates like me were recruited to serve in that department.

The OFADEC's objective was to strengthen the department, the importance of which seemed to be vital for the future of the programme, after a three-year experience. After all, OFADEC, which had launched its activities in the eastern part of Senegal in 1977 intended to promote the participation of the rural populations, whom it was assisting, in the process of their self-development within the framework of an economic and social approach.

The context of the OFADEC's intervention in Senegal was characterized by the cycle of drought that had become common in the Sahel, and which made the conditions of living of the rural populations, who constitute the majority, very hard. For the OFADEC, the choice of the eastern part of Senegal was due to the fact that the region is a landlocked one, situated at 500 kms from the capital city. The area's economy is dominated by a winter agriculture and livestock. The region in question, which benefits from River Gambia, borders Mali, Gambia, Guinea and Guinea Bissau.

Traditionally, there were also seasonal population movements. The scarcity of rains had accentuated the rural to urban areas exodus, especially towards Tambacounda, the regional headquarters (450 kms from Dakar).

The objective of OFADEC was to stop that rural exodus by establishing a modernized agriculture with a system of simple irrigation and physical planning.

The strategy applied by OFADEC with regard to the promotion of an integrated community development was based on the creation of village cooperatives through a three phase process:

1. The first phase goes from the creation of the cooperative and the development of the agricultural parameter up to the first harvest. At this stage, which usually lasts for 18 months, all the costs are covered by the NGO which in addition provides some foodstuff and a small amount of money (about 10 dollars) per month.

2. The second phase starts with the first harvest and it is characterized by the establishment of a co-management system between OFADEC and the cooperative, whereby the costs are shared. At this stage, the cooperative contribution increases proportionally to the growth of its activities while the NGO's contribution decreases.

3. The last phase is the phase at which the NGO withdraws its support to the cooperative that has reached the stage of maturity. It is then assumed that the cooperative has sufficient means and skills, to support itself, and all expenses incurred by OFADEC towards it are refundable.

The whole process should last a maximum of five years. Within the irrigated parameters the main crops are: banana (the main cash crop), irrigated maize plantations and vegetables (off season).

OFADEC had established many departments in order to carry out its activities:

—the production department (The production department was in charge of technical aspects with regard to crops — physical planning, installation of tractors and motor pumps, selection of crop varieties...),
—the administration and finance department,
—the health department,
—the training department.
The training department had four functions:
—to ensure cooperative training for all related organs, so as to make them more democratic and participatory,
—to facilitate literacy among cooperators,
—to facilitate the technical training of cooperators (management, tractor driving, handling of motor pumps, utilization of fertilizers ...) in collaboration with other OFADEC departments.

Thanks to the assistance of the International Labour Office (OIT), the said training department was established in 1978, with the aim of facilitating the people's participation in the OFADEC activities.

Nevertheless, that initiative did not last for long, because the approach was quite classic and based on programmes which had very little in common with the local conditions.

Thus, by recruiting young people, inexperienced but motivated and whose political ideas were considered radical, OFADEC intended to do away with the type of classic training so as to adopt a new and more participatory approach.

In 1980, when we joined OFADEC, its activities covered six villages — the same number of cooperatives — even though each cooperative had only about one hundred members; but the total number of people who were directly or indirectly concerned amounted to more than 5000 persons.

The six trainers' team, acting at the six villages' level, started their work by an exercise of evaluation of the cooperators' needs in the field of training, on the one hand, and with a study of the local sociological conditions.

One of the objectives of that evaluation was to identify the themes for the cooperators' training. It had also to establish up to what level the management system established by OFADEC had been accepted by the populations, or in other words whether the community system established within the cooperatives was really functional.

The procedure used within the framework of that evaluation was after all classic: the trainers' team was, in the course of the exercise, to familiarize itself with the villages where its members were acting and use a questionnaire during interviews with cooperators. It should be indicated that all cooperators were interviewed in each village.

The whole process of this evaluation exercise lasted for three months and hereafter are its main results:

a. Almost all the cooperators considered the OFADEC management system as a harmonious system that took into account their traditions of community life.

b. All agreed with three phase progressive scheme put forward by OFADEC and were ready to be trained in various fields so as to take over the OFADEC functions.

c. Functional literacy, in French, was one of their main concerns.

Those idealistic conclusions of the evaluation did satisfy the OFADEC management and the trainers' team. But it very soon became clear that they did not correspond to the reality.

Indeed, after about six months of cohabitation with the cooperators, a number of factors indicated the complexity of social relations at the level of supported villages and cooperatives.

It thus became clear that cooperatives were rather the affair of the dominant class of the village where they were established and that the influential people of the said village had more say within them than their "foreign" members.

Women and young people were also systematically excluded from their decision making process.

Well, there was some representation, but only nominal, of foreigners and women at the various cooperative boards of directors, and at such instances as general assemblies, it was a matter of approving decisions taken in other quarters.

On the other hand, it was clear that the system of a collective perimeter established by OFADEC did not strengthen the sense of community, because of its poor technical performance. On the contrary, it rather tended to aggravate inegalities by enabling big families, especially those of influential people to accumulate more working days, which constituted the basis for the sharing of production. Those who could also afford to employ casual workers to work on their behalf continued to benefit from their cooperative membership: sharing of profits, distribution of foodstuff....

Generally speaking, the same types of production relationship that generated social disparities at the village level were being reproduced within the collective perimeter. It was thus not surprising that while the acreage production was decreasing at the perimeter level, the individual (or family) farms were more looked after by the rich peasants who were the land owners—the landless having of course no right at those.

Given such circumstances, there seemed to be a double language, one for foreign people, and giving the impression of harmony and

responding to the interests of influential people, and the other, which reflected the objective conditions, but that could be perceived only after a period of cohabitation with the peasants. It seemed to satisfy everyone's interests: while visiting cooperatives OFADEC and funding agencies felt satisfied by the tune of community speeches, and the landless did not want to jeopardize their precarious situation by denouncing the influential people.

Once the trainers' team became aware of that situation, a new strategy was adopted in order to make the evaluation more objective.

The said strategy was based on the following assumptions:

1. It was first necessary to gain the peasants' confidence so that they may express freely their opinion and their analysis.

   This was essential and it was not automatic; because, as indicated above, the trainers were young educated people from urban areas, which in itself did not attract the peasants' trust. Apart from that, like most of the OFADEC personnel, their socialist political orientation made them naturally believe that the system of collective production in place was more appropriate than the private property. The question is: What does one do to ensure the real participation of the peasants?

2. Because of its philosophy, OFADEC had to aim its activities mainly towards the disadvantaged groups, particularly the landless, women and young people.

   Indeed, even if the influential people had played some role with regard to the introduction of OFADEC at their village level, that did not mean that they should control the cooperatives.

   What should be done to ensure the implementation of democratic principles within cooperatives?

3. Peasants perceived OFADEC as a charity organization, that came with its own development scheme and which they should avoid to displease, so as to continue getting support from it while at one and the same time developing strategies that did not much correspond to stated principles, but which responded to the cooperators' fundamental needs.

What was to be done so as to get OFADEC put into practice its own participatory principles by enabling the cooperators decide themselves the best way to ensure their development?

As a response to those various questions, the following proposals were put forward by the training team:

1. To break the barrier between them and the cooperators by participating more actively in their daily activities, through promotion actions at the village level, especially among the youth (cine-clubs, football matches...).
2. To identify the most active people among the disadvantaged and to establish strong human links with them.
3. The recruiting of a woman by OFADEC as a liaison officer with cooperatives.
4. To do away with questionnaires and to encourage discussions in general assemblies where issues of general interest are debated and following which resolutions adopted are implemented.
5. To encourage exchanges between cooperatives so as to promote a sound emulation and the circulation of information.
6. To encourage young people from urban areas to get affiliated to cooperatives, so as to minimize the local influential people's influence.
7. To organize an exchange programme for and between cooperators and peasants from various regions.

At the end of one year during which these proposals were implemented, a lot of positive results were registered with regard to the participation of peasants in the sound management of their cooperative. Of course, with regard to villages, the progress was more or less apparent, but generally speaking large meetings (general assemblies) played more and more the role of forums where collective problems were solved and the position of influential people was jeopardized following elections that brought to the fore the most talented people of the cooperative movement.

The reorganization of the production system brought about the most outstanding result, with the acquisition of individual farms.

Furthermore, following the improvement of their income due to the new production system, the cooperators could contribute more to common interest projects such as: health,

education, recreational projects, etc.

All that was achieved through the participation of all interested parties. Cooperators were more and more resolving their own problems and they did hesitate to propose to the OFADEC cadres solutions to technical problems that looked too complicated to solve.

However, faced with a situation whereby they were more and more losing their advantages, the local influential people reacted by activating their political and administrative alliances against OFADEC, especially against the trainers, brandishing them as "politicians", and as "subversive elements". The landless people were also accused of exploiting the best areas, often simply because they were making the best use of it.

At this stage OFADEC found itself in a dilemma: it had either:

—To strengthen the innovative trend initiated in collaboration with the poor peasants, and if necessary create new villages, in case the influential people of the old ones did not abandon their hostile attitude towards the landless cooperators and the trainers; or

—To readopt the previous approach, so as not to displease the influential people and the politico-administrative apparatus.

After rough discussions both at the cooperative level and within OFADEC, it is the second alternative that was finally adopted. The training department was consequently abolished in 1983 and the training team dismissed, apart from one trainer who was serving a cooperative composed of members who had all come from the urban area.

## Conclusion

In 1986, I had the opportunity of visiting the OFADEC villages. It was within the framework of an evaluation study funded by the Ford Foundation.

A new training department with a more classic approach had been reconstituted. The advantages inherent to the small individual farms ownership persisted. Nevertheless, that affected more and more the community character of the programme.

Generally speaking, OFADEC was going through a difficult period, because of funding problems.

But, finally, what was reassuring was that the peasants had become more demanding with regard to their rights and were determined to participate, individually and collectively, in the development process with or without OFADEC.

That experience was very useful to me and to my colleagues of the training team. First, it was the first long contact with the rural populations, and moreover, apart from certain general ideological principles the theory of participatory research was unknown to the development agents, as it is still the case in most Francophone countries of West Africa.

Hereafter, some of the many lessons I got from that experience:

1. The simple profession of the participatory concept, by cadres as well as by development agencies is not enough.

   It is a process throughout which all the parties concerned must constantly review their viewpoints. It is a mutual learning process where in most cases the cadre and/or the development agency have more to learn.

2. The populations, especially the rural populations, do develop strategies in order to find solutions to their problems, instead of being passive with regard to events, and they always do it in a participatory manner.

   The cadre or the development agency must take that into account, so as to consider, in collaboration with them, what is possible or not in view of the experience acquired by peasants in a particular field

   Any positive changes or any other innovation cannot succeed without due collaborations with the populations.

3. A real participation of the populations in a development action introduced from without supposes a certain number of conditions, such as:

   a. A deep knowledge of the objective social conditions, i.e. the existing social strata and consequently of the economic, social and cultural pressures.

   b. The deepest possible integration with the populations, particularly with the disadvantaged.

   c. A valorization of all the means that facilitate the expression of different opinions and viewpoints, with regard to socio-cultural realities: general assemblies, group discussions, popular plays...

SEYDOU SALL

# FARMDEV, Inc., Philippines

## The FARMDEV

The Forum for Approaches in Research, Media and Development, Inc. (FARMDEV) is an education agency serving the basic communities in the four provinces of Agusan and Surigao, Mindanao, Philippines. Through its Micro-Media Programme, Popular Education Programme, Resource Development Programme and Partnership and Linkages Programme, FARMDEV reach out to the marginalized sector in Northeast Mindanao (NEM) and participate in their struggle for self-determination.

Since 1981 it had helped groups of farmers, labourers, women, tribal people and other sectors in their trainings and education towards attaining critical consciousness. FARMDEV aims to contribute to the education of the people so that they can analyse and understand their own situation and most of all the forces that shape these situations.

FARMDEV values alternative and liberating education—an education towards a human and democratic Philippines society via alternative media, research, education and development projects.

## The context of evaluation assistance

As early as 1982, FARMDEV started its evaluation assistance to people's programmes and organizations in Northeast Mindanao — health programme, justice and peace programme, young people's activities and farmers' organization. The succeeding points are the documentation of the process and learnings of FARMDEV in its evaluation assistance to people's programme and organizations as well as its experience in evaluating its own work. These experiences are limited to a four to five days' evaluation sessions of the requesting programme and organizations.

In the case of FARMDEV's work in NEM, the following realities of people's programme and organizations are worth mentioning:

1. People's development programme and organizations in NEM came into being to respond to the needs of the basic sector who are victims of human rights violations and who aspire and struggle for a more human and democratic society.

   People's programmes and organizations in NEM are operating in the context of the socio-economic and political realities of NEM in particular, and of the whole Philippines in general. The standpoint is clear, that is to work and be one with the basic masses who struggle for selfdetermination.

2. People's development programme and organizations are manned by persons who have strong commitment for change but have lesser skills to do the work systematically. Specific manifestations of this reality are the following:

   2.1 *Lack of definite long range plans:* The ultimate goal of people's programmes and organizations is clear. However, there are difficulties in planning concrete and interrelated steps to achieve this goal. Most often activities conducted are based on requests and relevant events. These seasonal' activities unfold the pragmatic nature of the programme of organization. Consequently, there are times that the workload is too great that workers will do overtime work. And when the 'season' changes, workers will become idle and are confused what to do next.

   2.2 Indifferent attitude towards professionalism in running programmes, methods of basic systematization and work simplification schemes are often times seen as encroachment of bourgeois tendencies. Professionalism in operations is not so enthusiastically adopted.

   2.3 *Documentation and report writing, a burden:* Stereotype notion states that documentation and other paperworks are only for the professionals and not for those who are immersed in working with the people. However, further investigation reveals that the real reasons to this attitude are the following: lack of thorough understanding on the importance of documentation in working with the people, lack of appropriate skills to do it, and the security risks given the political conditions in the area where those who are working for people's

development are labelled as subversives.

It is very important to note however that people's programmes and organizations are very rich in direct experiences.

2.4 *Multi roles of a single organization* vis-a-vis *its nature and direction:* It is a common observation that people's organizations and programmes sometimes launch activities contrary to their nature. In this case duplication and unnecessary overlapping of work happened instead of synchronizing efforts and maximizing resources. This is not surprising because these programmes/organizations are very much affected by the enormous needs and demands of their target beneficiaries as well as with the broad and general description of their own work.

2.5 *Hazy coordination work with other related organizations or programmes:* This usually occurs in organization-institution relationship. Per experience, an institution imposes activities for implementation to the organization without actually discussing with them the comprehensive plan. The organization on the other hand reacts to this approach, since they also have their own needs not considered by the service institution. Because of this problem of undefined coordination, sometimes the two will launch the same activity and it is the beneficiaries who will be confused in the process.

2.6 *Readymade plans for implementation:* This contradicts the liberating aspect of the humanization process in development work. In most cases, implementors do not participate in the conceptualization process so that they could implement plans according to what was explained to them and according to their own codification of these plans. This result is a strained relationship between the conceptualizers and the implementors since the former will demand a 'to the letter' implementation and the latter for close guidance. If the implementation fails, the bulk of the blame is given to the implementors.

3. *Evaluation, a built-in mechanism of people's programmes/organizations:* In the daily existence of people's organizations, evaluation plays an important role. Consciously, evaluations are made part of the work and are exercised:

   a. every after a major activity
   b. monthly
   c. quarterly
   d. year-end, in the form of summing-up of the whole year operations.

Integral in this process is the self-evaluation wherein workers reflect on their experiences and processes and lay down recommendations for rectification.

The above realities of people's development programmes/organizations as well as the socio-economic and political conditions provide the context of FARMDEV's evaluation assistance to these groups.

## Objectives of evaluations

People's programme and organizations requesting for evaluations have the following objectives:

1. To sum up past experiences to be able to draw out lessons and recommendations for future actions.
2. To define the nature of the organization/programme and streamline activities.
3. To set up direction of the programme/organization and lay down long range objectives.
4. To resolve management programmes and prepare for a basic management training.
5. To level-off understanding of the whole programme/organization among staff members, or workers towards a unified view in running the whole programme/organization.

As for FARMDEV as the facilitator, the main objective of the whole process is education towards people's empowerment. Evaluation is seen as an opportunity for the people to learn to express themselves, to objectify their own experiences and to analyse their situation and the forces shaping these situations.

## Conducting evaluation sessions

FARMDEV conducts evaluation upon request by people's programme/organizations. The FARMDEV evaluators only facilitate the process so that the participants can objectify their work experience.

The evaluation follows the following phases:

### I. Pre-evaluation session

1. Discussion-sharing with the head of the organization/programme.
2. Discussion-sharing with the staff members and other workers related to the programme/organization to be evaluated.
3. Informal sharing with the other organizations or programmes who have coordination work with the organization.
4. Informal feedback gathering from a few of the target beneficiaries.
5. Study of all available documents of the organization / programme (particularly minutes of meetings and assessment results).
6. Brainstorming on the objectives and direction of the particular evaluation together with the key persons of the concerned organization/programme.

The pre-evaluation session is the preparation phase. Here the facilitator familiarizes itself with the organization's workings. This phase helps her/him facilitate a down-to-earth discussion with the group, provides her/. him with the preliminary data and assumes her /him that the group will be talking in the same wavelength during the actual evaluation.

### II. Evaluation proper

1. Levelling-off of expectations and objectives of the session by all those who will participate in the evaluation.
2. Evaluation proper
   - 2.1 review of objectives and plans,
   - 2.2 presentation of data in the forms of activities conducted, persons involved, time-frame, concrete results, problems encountered, solutions to problems, etc.,
   - 2.3 discussion, clarification and validation of data presented, exchange of views and opinions,
   - 2.4 synthesis of the discussion, drawing out of learnings and discoveries (group work),
   - 2.5 projections' setting.

The evaluation proper exhausts the participation of everybody who is involved in the operations of the organization. To achieve this, the facilitator injects reflective questions and often times serves as the devil's advocate in order for the participants to objectify their experiences and learn lessons from it.

### III. Post-evaluation (follow-up stage and the planning process)

After the evaluation session, the next stage will be consultancy stage. The organization/ programme will seek the aid of the facilitator in operationalizing certain recommendations made during the evaluation session. The culmination of this activity (after a two-day break) is the planning process which is being done by everybody with the guidance of the facilitator who prepares the foundation by discussing with the participants the mechanics of planning.

Steps:

1. Study of the present situation (of the environment, socio-economic and political situation of the needs of the target beneficiaries, of the capacities and limitations of the programme/organization),
2. Clarification of the nature of the people's programme/organization and direction setting,
3. Planning (setting-up objectives, plotting activities, formulating indicators of success, etc.).

The post-evaluation phase is the outcome of the evaluation session proper. After the people's programme/organization is being confronted with the work experience—strengths, weaknesses, lessons—a desire to straighten things up to become more effective to the beneficiaries is brought about.

## Observations/discoveries/learnings

It is important to note that all these evaluation experiences ended up in basic management trainings. This is so because of the desire of the participants to be equipped with the skills so that they can improve their self-evaluation activities and do their own programme evaluation in the future more effectively.

During the evaluation proper, workers in people's programme/organizations realize that in the course of their working with the people, they have no strategic plans, that is to look ahead and view things beyond what happens today; they tactically analysed activities and events and employ stopgap solutions in solving problems instead of hitting the key problem which is crucial in the major shifts of the organization/programme operations.

In all these experiences, it has been the guiding principles of FARMDEV to involve as much as possible all those concerned including the beneficiaries. Participation is the key work in evaluation work as well as in the other work of FARMDEV.

Above all, FARMDEV is concerned with the humanization process, both of the beneficiaries and that of the workers. In every evaluation conducted, the following questions are always incorporated as a check of the process:

—"Are the persons doing development work developed in the process?"

—"Are the methods employed in the work for development liberating both the beneficiaries and development workers?"

—"Are the target beneficiaries given the chance to express their views and analysis on certain things/events affecting their own lives?"

Finally the ultimate questions asked during the evaluation of people's programme/organization, to measure results are:

—"What happened to the target beneficiaries with the activities being launched?"

—"If you will phase out the programme, can the beneficiaries continue the work you have started?"

—"Are you confident that the beneficiaries can already withstand any difficulty in the future without the programme/organization?"

These questions usually will silence the participants and will bring them to reflection and self-examination. From here, a new lit of enthusiasm to be with the basic masses is renewed, new strength and courage are built up, and a new perspective is developed. Development work is now seen as a task for the beneficiaries and for the workers in solidarity with all the others who struggle to attain a more humane social order.

In our evaluation work as well as in all our trainings, we make it a point to comprehensively weave liberating education principles in the whole process together with the participants. We create conditions to objectify experiences for the programme/organization to critically analyse their own work and do something with the discoveries, learnings, and recommendations that will surface during the whole process.

As facilitators to these work experiences, FARMDEV together with evaluation participants crystallized the following learnings:

1. Internalization of the nature and direction of the programme/organization and setting up clear goals based on sound analysis of the environment and needs of the beneficiaries will facilitate a focused discussion and indepth learning processes during evaluations.

2. Providing opportunities and conditions for development workers to create and to liberate themselves in the process of working for the development of people is part of the whole humanization process. This could be concretely done through a participatory process in the conceptualization and planning, implementation and evaluation.

3. Evaluation is a learning process, a powerful tool for empowerment and a venue for man to reflect as man, as subjects not as objects to be manipulated, as persons who exercise self-determination and master conditions.

4. The success of evaluation as a learning process depends upon the openness of the persons participating in the evaluation and the facilitators' internalization of the programme, of the socio-economic and political situation where this programme/organization is contextualized and her/his genuine participation and commitment to assume responsibility not only in the process but also in the results.

MELODIA TABORNAL-ARBAN

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# A MANGYAN CASE, Philippines

Indigenous people in the Philippines number at least 4,000,000, equivalent to 12 per cent of the country's total population. In one of the country's big archipelagos are to be found a group of ethnic tribes collectively called the Mangyans. Their simple and peaceful living is being threatened by exploitation of opportunist groups and individuals. They are now beginning to recognize the problems besetting them which are actually no different from the problems faced by their fellow indigenous brothers and sisters throughout the country. Initial and decisive local actions in response to these problems have been taken through their community leaders. They were able to articulate their basic demands along their four points of struggle:

1. Self-identity
2. Ancestral lands
3. Respect for their indigenous laws and culture, and
4. Self-determination.

In 1980, an NGO in response to their problems and support to their struggle embarked on community organizing activities among the Mangyans. The approach employed was rural conscientization. Field workers were made to integrate/immerse in their community and served as facilitator for local activities related to organizing. To ensure the continuity of the organizing programme, potential leaders were eyed and developed. The education component of such an activity was implemented to the initiative of progressive leaders among them.

It was then more of a sweeping or loose organizational structure which was actually a preparatory stage for the formation of a formal community organization. Assessment activities were facilitated by the field workers who were immersed into their living condition. The purposes of such assessment were to identify the level of awareness of the potential local leaders and which would then gauge the field workers in upgrading their level into a higher level of consciousness in their struggle.

The main principle involved the drawing out system wherein they were made to feel free and feel their right to articulate their ideas and opinions. This process was seen as a tool for empowerment of these indigenous people as they developed the confidence in themselves through active participation in assessment activities.

In 1982, the NGO field workers were pulled out from the community while the local link with the NGO was maintained through the community leaders and other local contacts. There had been ongoing local initiatives in response to micro issues in the form of sporadic community actions against illegal logging and landgrabbing. Consultations between the local leaders and NGO representatives/organizers included assessment activities wherein the local leaders bring in their diagnosis of area conditions and recommendations as well as seeking assistance from the NGO. It was also during this period when the potential leaders recommended by the community elders were undergoing skills training outside their area under the sponsorship of the NGO.

This has been the condition until 1986 when another NGO pursued the community organizing programme and fielded their community organizers. The field worker adopted the approach employed by the former NGO. Assessment activities were done with the core group members identified among the existing progressive local people. The field worker acts only as facilitator for the core group members to articulate and systematize their discussion.

The nature of organizing started with the follow-up of existing progressive leaders who were the product of the past organizing efforts of the former NGO in 1980 and 1981. Presently, community organizations have been evolved among the different settlements in the area, expanding from one tribe into two tribes. Plans are to include other tribes so as to achieve a more unified Mangyan struggle for their common ends (as stated earlier).

The focus of evaluation involved in the analysis of organization wherein the strengths and weaknesses are identified and analysed objectively with the leaders who then come up with their own recommendations for planning and future actions. The assessment of activities and organization is always linked and contextualized within their basic demands.

The impact of assessment activities included the expansion in membership to the organizations. A factor seen was the initiatives of

the members of the organizations who have undergone organizational trainings and participated in community (struggle) activities to influence other non-members to join in through their conversation and conferring about the issues they are facing. Assessment also brings out ideas based on their objective analysis of the prevalent conditions regarding what relevant activities are seen by them. Here they cite or identify possible projects that will serve to unite or increase the solidarity among the members of the organizations.

A major characteristic feature of the methods and process of Participatory Evaluation is the adoption of a structure of activities as a guide for evaluation. The components of the structure of activities are embodied along the five different aspects namely: education, social issues, organization, economic and health. It involves assessing of different/all the activities done under each aspect. Here, the local organizations come up with the strength, weaknesses and recommendations from which they draw out their plans for the next activities. The impact of activities are also assessed as to their bearing on their basic demands.

The framework of structure of activities only served as guide; the description of their experience/expression of ideas is coming from the indigenous people themselves.

The outcomes of evaluation activities feature facilitation of the evaluation of a systematized implementation of their activities through the formation of relevant strategies and techniques as a product of ideas and experiences they articulate. Another result is the acquisition of additional skills on managing the organization on the part of the indigenous group involved. Still another thing noteworthy is the strengthening of their commitment and a further deepening of the concept and essence of their struggle.

The follow-up actions consist of moves based from the past/previous assessment and plans. These follow-up actions in the form of follow-up assessment to check on the developments within a certain period after the previous assessment has helped much in systematizing the activities being undertaken better. Parameters are also set to gauge the capacity of an organization towards self-reliance.

A recurrent issue in evaluation with the indigenous people are the difficulties encountered in dealing with them who have different levels or the existence of imbalances in their awareness towards their common struggle. This is due to the presence of relatively advance and relatively (left) lagged behind individuals or groups in their perception of their existing problems.

PAT MANIO

# A STUDY OF THREE HELVETAS PARTNERS, Philippines

## The evaluator

Partners in Self-Reliant Technology for Development (PARTNERS) is a non-stock, non-profit service institution based in Naga City (Bicol region), Philippines. Primarily, it was established to assist in the empowerment of the peasantry in the region through the conduct of socio-economic projects, researches and trainings.

PARTNERS started in June 1986, from the initiative of a group of professionals who have had experiences in institutional (NGO) work. Coming from various fields of endeavour, the group started off with a six-month research project. The project used the principles of participatory research but was not very much successful due to uncontrollable external factors. Most of the research areas were heavily militarized and impeded the staff from long period of integration with the target sources of information.

In mid-1987, PARTNERS launched a participatory training project. The project went through the stage of identifying the training needs of the target beneficiaries prior to the conduct of the training proper. This stage which lasted for six months entailed series of structured and non-structured interviews with the target participants. Validated results of the interviews were made the bases for drafting the training curriculum.

The project is at its last stage. General evaluation of the training and follow-ups is being conducted for the next trainings.

Presently, PARTNERS is conducting a participatory evaluation on institutional planning and development. This is the case study discussed in this paper.

## A. Background

A Study of Three Helvetas Partners Regarding Institutional Planning and Development is still an on-going project conducted to three non-government organizations in Mindanao. The study is basically research which is also evaluation in nature.

The study evolved from the recommendation of all Helvetas Partners in the Philippines during its annual meeting in March 1987. Helvetas Swiss Cooperation for Development is a funding agency which supports a number of NGOs in the Philippines. Helvetas has a Philippine office.

The general objective of the study is to draw lessons on the actual practice of institutional planning and development from among Helvetas Partners. The lessons that will be derived from the study will serve as reference for all other NGOs in the country.

For the subjects of this study, the aim is to help consolidate themselves institutionally and organizationally by identifying problem areas in their courses of operation. The study is evaluative in nature because the different processes they have undergone all throughout their existence will be assessed based on certain criteria.

The subjects, however, will not be assessed and evaluated based on parameters and criteria set by Helvetas but on their perceived and felt needs. In this way, the study will benefit primarily the subjects with the hope that through the process, they will be able to improve their performance and effectivity not only in the programmes being supported by Helvetas but more in achieving their goals they have set for themselves.

## B. Main principles operationalized in the process

The main principle applied in the process is maximum participation of the subjects all throughout the different stages of the study. The respondents were not treated as mere source of information for which the study could jump from. Rather, they were treated as keys to the solutions of the problems confronting them in their operations. Hence, their involvement from the start to the end of the study.

In this case, the terms of reference were worked out jointly by each subject and the Case Study Team. The subject decided on what aspects should be highlighted and be apportioned deeper analysis. They were also more decisive on the extent of information that will be divulged to the reading public.

During integration with them, they provided counterpart in terms of material resources.

The subjects also participated in the validation and analysis of the data.

## C. Focus of the evaluation

The study is focused on institutional planning and development. How the subjects exercise the principles of institutional planning and development *vis-a-vis* their particularities and commonalities is the main question being answered. The whole of the institution—its orientation, programmes and organization—was studied. Emphasis, however, is given to the specific process undergone in their operationalization and the contributing factors alongside.

In measuring the degree of success and failure, the targets set by the subject serve as bases for its appraisal—the plan-*vs*-actual scheme. Emphasis is also afforded to the impact of subjects' services to the beneficiaries.

In the final analysis, services of the subjects will be weighed in terms of appropriateness, applicability, technical and social feasibility. Alternatives to the problems encountered by the subjects will be laid down considering all possible resources and constraints.

From the experiences of these subjects, the role of Non-Government Organizations and that of the People-Based Organizations will be put into context. NGOs which assume services to the needs and problems of people's organi zations is fast being eroded by the growing tendencies of people's organizations to summarily assume the functions of NGOs.

Incidentally, two of the subjects are people-based organizations which at the same time function like an NGO. They have their service arm to answer the needs and problems of their members. The question at stake is the perspective of NGO work.

## D. Methodology

The study underwent three general phases: Preparatory Phase in Phase I, Operationalization Phase in Phase II and Output Dissemination in Phase III.

In Phase I, the Case Study team was formed through PARTNERS. With due consultation with Helvetas, the study team set plans and strategies which was later consulted to the subjects upon their confirmation of intent to participate in the study.

Prior to the actual conduct of the study, consultations with each of the subjects were done. Objectives, methodology and terms of reference specific to each of the three subjects were jointly worked out by the study team and the subjects. All agreements as regards the conduct of the study were finalized in these consultations.

In Phase II, data gathering was conducted using structured and computer-based questionnaires. Questionnaires were based from initial data gathered from the subjects and were structured, based from the particularities of each of the three subjects. Informal discussions were also conducted with some respondents, as the case may be. The use of computer-based questionnaires was to speed up analysis and firm up the basis for conclusions.

A minimum of two weeks and maximum of one month was spent for integration in their specific areas of operation. Interviews were conducted during the integration.

Data were processed after and validated through key persons of the subjects. Data gaps were filled in and controversial issues clarified. Preliminary analysis derived from trends in the data were shared with the subjects in this stage.

In Phase III, which has not been achieved yet, results will be shared with other Helvetas Partners, comes March 20-26, 1988.

## E. Outcome

The study is just about to enter its Phase III.

## F. Follow-up actions

Follow-ups will rest in the hands of Helvetas staff and management. Recommendations formulated by the study team will be subjected to further study by the subject and Helvetas. The role of the study team will end to the identification of problem areas where collaboration between the two organizations can be improved.

## G. Impact

For the study team, this pioneering study on institutional planning and development adds to its knowledge and research experiences. To conduct a study on a burning issue regarding the interrelationship of NGOs and PBOs is a

contribution in itself to the whole Filipino struggle. It has widened every team member's perspective over the issue and has even inculcated a want to go deeper into the realm of the issues.

## H. Issues in evaluation

Along the process of the study, the study team was confronted with some realities which in the context of participatory evaluation will hamper the success of the approach.

For one, Philippine NGOs are exposed to risks considering the impression the present and even the previous government has laid on them. Philippine NGOs espousing pro-people stance in their operation are suspected communist supporters and are, therefore, placed under tight surveillance and harassments.

Under such an atmosphere, the staff and their beneficiaries tend to compartmentalize certain issues they think might put them in hot water if they divulge them to external groups. Consequently, the evaluators are left with no choice but to base their analysis and conclusions on "half-truth" or "no-true" data. Hence, the objective of helping these people is forfeited.

The case of heavy militarization in some areas where the study is being conducted makes the situation more difficult.

In the case of Filipino peasants, the still prevailing neo-colonial culture evoked low-profile attitude among them. For these people who mostly did not finish formal schooling, evaluators or anybody of the middle-force nature are the more knowledgeable and that there are no rooms for their so-called petty ideas. This kind of attitude affects much the generation of data and their participation to the analysis of these data.

The concept and practice of participatory evaluation was found useful and important among struggling nations like the Philippines. Empowerment is characterized by people's participation. A criticism to any participatory activity, however, is its expensive nature. Any group conducting a participatory evaluation or any of that sort should have sufficient material and financial resources to achieve its goals.

Integration with the target subjects is the key to the door of the realities surrounding them. It takes time and, therefore, money. The advent of scientific approaches to this type of activities adds to the expenses.

# CLASEP, Mexico

## I. Background

1.1 The Centro Latino Americano de Apoyo al Saber y la Educacion Popular (CLASEP)[1], was founded in 1981 in Mexico City as a non-government organization. An educational and non-profit organization, it is committed to assist in the strengthening of the popular sector's protagonistic capacity for the definition and attainment of a development that is in agreement with its interests and expectations.

The Centre has mainly promoted the autosystematization and autoevaluation of the education of the masses.

The CLASEP team has also promoted the establishment of the Programa Latino Americano de CEAAL[2] en Apoyo a la Sistematizacion y Autoevaluacion de Programas de Educacion Popular[3] and at a regional level, the Programa Global de Apoyo a la Sistematizacion y Autoevaluacion de la Educacion Popular[4]—both of which are coordinated and counselled by CLASEP.

The experiences resulting from these two programmes are contained in the case study presented in this paper.

1.2 The lines of action that the Centre promotes at present within the sphere of popular education, are:

a. Systematization and autoevaluation;

b. Participatory research/action;

c. People's legal defence and culture;

d. Training of farmers;

e. Reconstruction of the history and struggles of popular sectors;

f. Teaching of reading and writing.

1.3 The main types of services offered, are:

a. Direct execution of programmes for popular education.

b. Production of didactic material.

c. Training of teachers for popular education.

d. Diffusion.

CLASEP is one of the founding members of CEAAL and of PRAXIS, an organization that groups 20 NGOs.

## II. Objectives of evaluation

### 2.1 General objectives

The purpose in both programmes is to strengthen the capacity of teachers as well as organizations, to consolidate their experiences in systematization and autoevaluation processes, by providing proposals, methodologies and instruments that could help them reinforce the intentionality, efficacy, efficiency and impact of the work in popular education.

### 2.2 Specific objectives

Considering the principal methodologic aspects of the projects, the two programmes intend to attain the following specific objectives:

#### 2.2.1 Prior to the projects' execution:

—Verify the consistency and coherence of its components.
—Evaluate the project's viability.
—Extend and consolidate the basis of group consent of the project.
—Identify needs for education that may strengthen the response capacity of the promoting team to carry out the project.

#### 2.2.2 During the execution phase:

—Contribute elements that improve the methodology and promotional practices developed by different sectors.
—Specify and/or adapt intended goals and objectives, based on data obtained from the action's development and on reflection thereon.
—Validate or modify initial strategies.
—Correct possible deviations.
—Identify needs for evaluation of the

[1] Latinamerican Centre for Popular Knowledge and Education
[2] Latinamerican Centre for Adult Education
[3] CEAAL's Latinamerican Programme for the Systematization and Autoevaluation of Popular Education Programmes
[4] Global Programme for the Systematization and Autoevaluation of Popular Education

viability of new actions.
—Specify and adjust programming.
—Identify needs for training in action.
—Find out the response capacity of the promoting team to the project's requirements.

2.2.3 **During the final phase:**

—Determine level of achievement with respect to proposed goals and objectives.
—Evaluate the impact of actions carried out on sought-after effects as well as on unexpected results.
—Portray the obstacles, favourable aspects, successes and failures of the process followed.
—Identify other projects or actions consensual to the executed project.

## III. Main principles operationalized during the process and focus of participatory evaluation

With the development of the obtained methodology, the validation of the following principles is sought:

a. Significance and relavancy.
b. Articulated reading of reality.
c. Globality.
d. Historicity.
e. Socialization.
f. Relativity.
g. Criticability.
h. Dynamic recurrence..
i. Self management participation.

## IV. Methodology and process of participatory evaluation

As one of the outcomes of the programme, a basic methodologic scheme has been developed that is considered valid for all evaluation processes, and it is integrated by seven phases/elements:

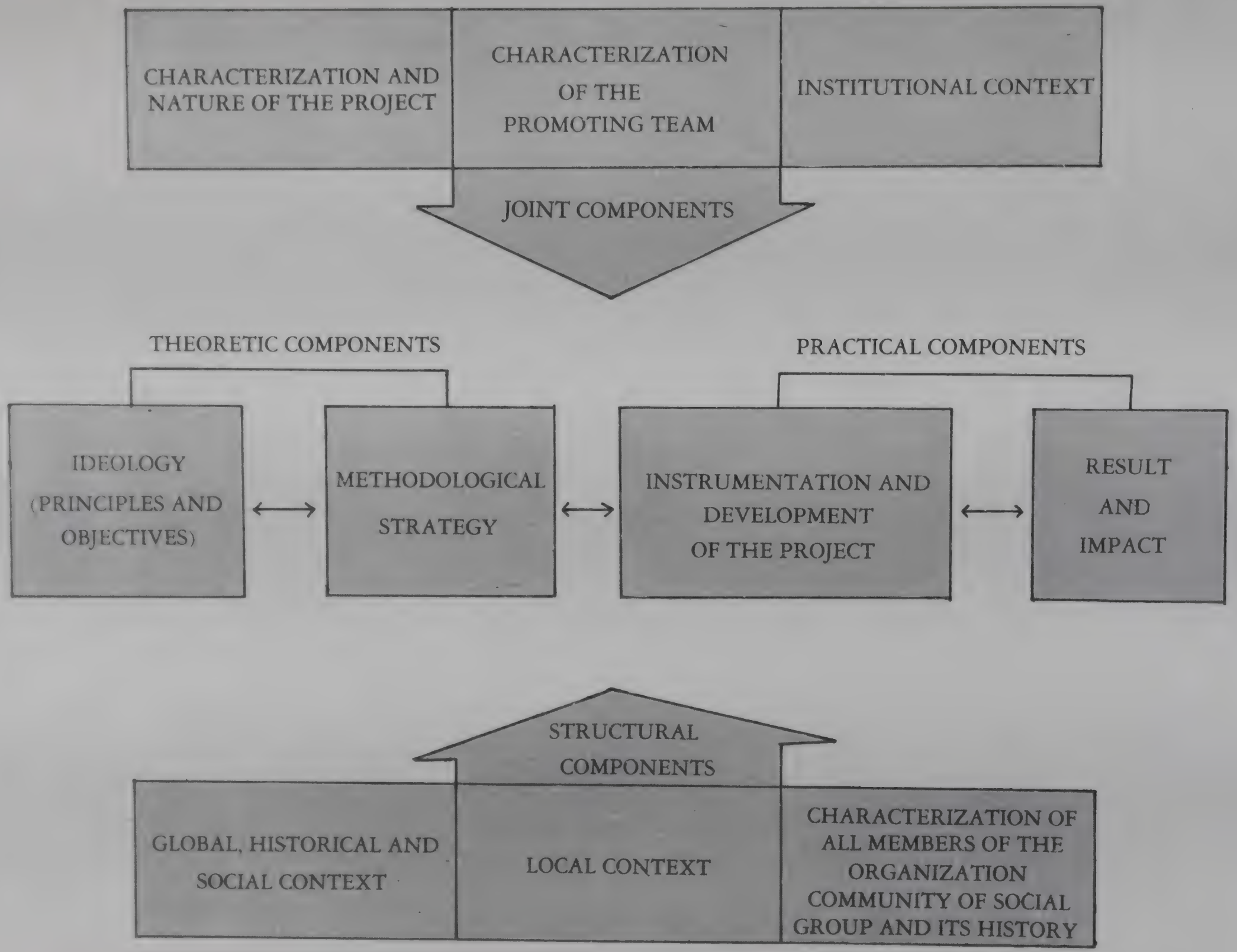
1. Characterization of all questions to be answered by evaluation.
2. Systematization of actions, facts and fields referred to by the questions.
3. Create or adopt the reference framework or parameter.
4. Establish contrast between 2 and 3.
5. Design a scale to express the results in magnitudes when required.
6. Establish conclusions or judgements resulting from the contrast in phase 4.
7. Devise the products/instruments that make applicable the results of the evaluation process and that can be applied to the project's praxis.

In order to instrument the global evaluation phases of a project, create an instrument that allows capture of the dynamics of this type of projects, integrated by the following elements:

a. Characterization and nature of the project.
b. Ideology (principles and objectives).
c. Methodological strategy.
d. Global historical and social context.
e. Local context.
f. Characterization of all members of the organization, community or social group and its history.
g. Characterization of the promoting team.
h. Institutional context.
i. Instrumentation and development of the project.
j. Results and impact.

CARLOS CADENA

# THE BASIC METHODOLOGIC SCHEME FROM SYSTEMATIZATION



# SARVODAYA RESEARCH INSTITUTE, Sri Lanka

Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement was started in 1958, with community development activities which was done by a group of volunteers. It was created to motivate the rural people to take part in their own development. Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement later established a research wing to facilitate these activities. Sarvodaya Research Institute in which I worked as a researcher from 1978 to 1982 was interested in participatory research, with the specific idea securing the people's participation at the maximum level. It was accepted that without involving people at the research level no participation of the people in Sarvodaya activities could be expected. At that time Professor Nadasena Ratnapala who was the Director of Sarvodaya Research Institute and who had much experience in the field of participatory research was concerned that SRI researchers should employ this method in order to involve people's participation. Professor Nandasena Ratnapala has done a good number of participatory research work such as The Beggar in Sri Lanka, Community Participation in Voluntary Organization, Police Public Relations, Alcoholism in a Sinhalese Village, etc.

This evaluation took place in a village called Uragasmanhandiya in southern Sri Lanka. One enthusiastic Public Health Instructor approached us through Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement. He was seeking help to solve problems in his own area where he has been living since his birth and has worked as a PHI for 10 years. Working as a PHI, he has experienced a lot of socio-economic problems in his own area, and through this experience he knew that the problems could not be solved without the participation of the people.

He wanted to find out how he could motivate people to identify their own needs and seek their own solution for them. It is in this context that we evolved this strategy from our own experiences in the field.

The objective of the evaluation was to identify the basic needs of the people and device strategies according to their likes and dislikes and involve them in translating these strategies into practice together with self evaluation.

Our emphasis was on getting at the decision makers in these villages. In order to do this, young people (both men and women) from the villages were motivated to identify such groups. They identified one mother, two young men and women and three elderly traditional leaders such as the village Buddhist monks, ayurvedic physician and village teacher.

Accordingly three groups came together in various places and talked about their needs. We as researchers participated in their discussions restricting our participation to the minimum level. Our idea was to make them talk and identify their needs without our intervention.

From these groups emerged their own plans for meeting their needs. Children's health including nutrition was a problem in these villages. As a consequence mother's group in each village came into being. In addition to this, young people's groups were organized. Traditional leaders and the young leaders were brought together. When they were in conflict we as researchers helped them to resolve them not by forcing over solution, but by gradually enabling them to understand each other. Groups met regularly and evaluated their own impact focussing attention on their weaknesses.

Methodology adopted in this exercise consisted of the following:

1. Living with the people for considerable time and becoming one of them. This was possible by the presence of research workers of the village by our long association with them.
2. By taking part in common development activities such as Shramadanas, maternity and child clinics etc.
3. Cultural activities based on the village temple.
4. Educational activities, organizations of pre-schools etc.
5. Group discussions with the minimum participation of the researchers.
6. Encouragement of exchanges of ideas pertaining to this evaluation on all informal occasions such as women go for water gather together in their workplaces, and go to maternity clinics.

The outcome was the emergence of felt needs such as the ill health of little children, lack of nutritional facilities for children and mothers, etc. These needs were answered by the people, by their eagerness to start pre schools in every village, community kitchens latrines and soliciting the people's help and the governmental help for better health facilities. There was a continuous evaluation as these activities were initiated.

Whenever possible follow up action was carried out in order to strengthen the programme. Shortcomings were identified and the people themsleves with their own resources attempted to meet these shortcomings.

Sarvodaya Research Institute and myself gathered from this a number of insights, which were later used involving community participation.

The most important issue was to raise the consciousness of the people that could make them identify shortcomings in their own programmes. Various strategies have to be devised in order to raise their consciousness to this level. As the villages, we selected, were in the majority very poor, socially extremely deprived with only opportunities for marginal education, this key issue was a perennial problem for us.

But anyhow since there are other villages who do possess identical characteristics. The experience we are gathered here enabled us to refine these programmes subsequently. How could poor,- uneducated socially backward communities be motivated to raise their consciousness to a level that would make them perceive their own problems and strategies to solve them and also become their own critics?

WIMALASENA PITIGALA

# MAJGAON MARGINAL FARMERS SAMITY, Bangla Desh

## 1. History of the organization

I selected for Participatory Evaluation (PE) a project on re-excavation and enlargement of a tank for modern fish culture by members of a marginal farmers' organized group under Caritas-DEEDS programme. The group was founded 20 May 1982 as the Majgaon Marginal Farmers Samity, Uttar Para, Rajshahi District. Twenty-three members, many of them landless, formed the original membership. Only one member left the group (in January 1988) and 13 of the members are very faithful in attending all the meetings. The largest size of landholding is 1.4 acres. Three members were educated to Class V and can read and write while the secretary had passed the Madrassa high school.

In early 1984 the group excavated a tank under the Rural Works Programme (RWP) of Caritas, greatly enlarging a small tank. Caritas expended Tk 31,550.19 for this work and the members cut 10 per cent of the earth as self-help contribution (the amount was reduced because the earth was hard). All the samity members worked on the project, besides other landless labourers. They began fish culture the same year under the Caritas Aquaculture Development Programme (ADP), stocking the traditional "Big 3" (*rui, catla* and *mrigal*), plus silver, grass and mirror carp. There were no profits in 1985 when the tank was first fished. In 1986 the profit was substantial but was not distributed among the members. According to a group decision those who did the work were to get a double share, while ordinary members would get a single share.

The group had carried out farming previously on their small pieces of land; three acres was accepted by Caritas as their understanding of a marginal farmer (though government considers a marginal farmer to own two acres or less, since 2.5 acres is the average size farm in Bangla Desh.

During the evaluation of the RWP in 1984, we visited the tank while the excavation was going on. In addition to the official report on the evaluation, I also prepared a justice analysis of several projects we had observed in order that the regional offices might discuss the project in this light and see if changes were needed.

I pointed out that this group was already doing IRRI cultivation in winter under a BRDP deep tubewell, for which all members had received loans of Tk 2000. The landholdings of the samity members had not been listed. It seemed to me that this samity was already much better situated economically than most of the hundreds of Caritas groups of the landless. Therefore, why couldn't the fishery project be given to a landless group? I never had a reply from the Regional Office and do not know if the case was ever discussed.

The Caritas samities were all to do PE as part of the annual evaluation process. I enquired about whether such evaluations had taken place or not. Since the samity has been going under Caritas direction for five years, it should be ready for independent self-reliant development with technical help when needed on the fishery side. Therefore, they should be able to do PE by now. They were allowed to do unguided evaluation on their own as the first step. The project Managing Committee also did the same. Thus, the ability of both groups to do evaluation on their own without outside help or facilitation was first tested.

The second step was to do PE with the group with the aid of a facilitator to see if the group itself could identify weaknesses in evaluation process.

## 2. Objectives

a. To learn the present level of the group's ability to understand the *aims* of evaluation, the *methods* of evaluation and the *actual results* of evaluation;

b. To ascertain this without influencing the group in any way, i.e., asking them simply to evaluate their experience, how they understand what they are doing and how they feel about it;

c. To analyse the results of the different group evaluations and then to sit with each group for an open-ended discussion to learn their ideas and plans about changes on improvements in the project;

d. To test hypotheses about the principles involved;

e. To compare the participatory process without an outside facilitator to that with a facilitator;

f. To see what a trained observer can add to what has been learned through the participatory process;

g. To see the effect of an outsider, an experienced participant/observer, on the PE process.

## 3. Main principles operationalized (hypotheses in advance)

Hypotheses were set in advance, which, if verified, would generate the main principles operationalized during the PE process. Each hypothesis and the reality observed are discussed together in the section on outcome (No. 6).

a. The project people know their needs and understand their problems best.

b. The group was sufficiently organized and trained in advance to be able to carry out the project themselves.

c. The group members understand sufficiently about the meaning of evaluation and the means to be used.

d. There is a high degree of trust and cooperation manifested among the partners.

e. A trained evaluator and facilitator can supplement the results of PE substantially.

f. However, changes and decisions made by the group itself are more effective.

## 4. Focus of evaluation

a. Organization — group cohesion; group understanding of project objectives.

b. Activity — understanding of technical processes, sharing of work and production, understanding of project results.

c. Impact — economic benefit to each member, growth in social power and influence, ability to resist or counteract local injustices.

d. Change — changes in: group attitudes in the local society or social system, in balance of power, in attitudes of non-group members, etc.

## 5. Methodology

1. The group was asked through the regional office to evaluate its own activities without influencing them in any way in order to see their present ability to understand the *aims* and the *methods* of evaluation and to analyse the actual *results* of evaluation.

2. The project Managing Committee was asked to discuss and evaluate the project and later to analyse the report of the samity members.

3. The Regional Office was then asked to have their project committee study the two reports and point out the weaknesses and what further steps should have been taken and could still be taken.

4. The outside facilitator (myself) then analysed the three written reports and sat with all the three groups to question them in order to bring out further aspects of the evaluation which had not been raised at all or had not been expressed adequately and to learn their ideas and plans for improvements in the project.

5. The outside facilitator then made independent enquiries to try to corroborate the PE given by the groups.

6. The facilitator tested the hypotheses formulated under No. 3 against the various evaluations to see if they had been verified.

## 6. Outcome of evaluation

### a. Group members:

Their chief hopes were to: cut and improve the tank, earn something digging it, improve the samity by fish culture, cut other tanks in the future from their profits, use the water, learn modern methods of fish culture, cultivate the banks, build up samity funds, help the poor of their village.

Their failures were: loss through flooding, improper feeding, bad relations with the owner and his failure to observe the contract. The reasons for failure were: negligence of the manager and chairman and their failure to attend the weekly meetings, their taking most of the profits, failure to feed the fish in spite of money in their fund.

Their successes were: their water problem was solved, they made money in cutting the tank, they learnt modern fish culture, they helped the poor.

### b. Local Project Managing Committee

They had basically the same points but elaborated them more. They blamed the failures on the negligence of the ordinary members and their failure to attend meetings and pay their weekly savings. They paid for the fish food from their own pockets and undertook all the responsibility for the pond. They also said that they couldn't extract fish regularly due to lack of a net. Some members got loans from the samity fund under regulation procedures but they didn't report on repayments. They maintained that they got no more improvement and benefit than the ordinary members.

### c. Caritas Regional Project Committee

The Regional Project Committee at Rajshahi evaluated the two reports of the samity members and the project Managing Committee and added their own comments concerning significant omissions. They stated that the project was begun with great eagerness and that the members had much training and were sufficiently motivated. The excavation work under the RWP had been very successful; all the members had taken part and had boosted their income and savings through the project.

There was every hope that the fish culture project would also be successful. In fact, the group ran well up to 1986 and some poor landless moved up to the middle class. However, in 1987 Caritas involvement lessened due to the group's inclusion in the final or Phase III of the DEEDS programme (concentrating on adult literacy). After Phase III, phase out would occur.

A leadership conflict arose because the educated secretary, who also acted as treasurer, had used Tk 2800 of the cash holdings for his own purposes. The members knew it and brought pressure on him but he has still not repaid inspite of promises.

Caritas' loans of Tk 10,000 were taken by 10 members in 1986 and a samity loan of Tk 6000 was given to six members (two got from both sources) for IRRI rice cultivation. But successive crop failures at harvest time, due to torrential rains in 1986 and floods in 1987, prevented their repaying the loans.

Moreover, the owner of the tank did not live up to the terms of the contract and did not allow the members to plant vegetables on the banks. He destroyed their banana plantation on the banks and grew grass and coconuts for himself. According to the contract, he was to receive 25 per cent of the profits from the banks. This impasse continues to the present.

The group is now disorganized but the landless members would like to separate from the marginal farmers (after settlement of all loans and repayment by the secretary) and manage the fish tank themselves. They feel that the marginal farmers got much benefit through their agriculture loans but they didn't get any loan or benefit.

### d. Final group evaluation

An evaluation session was held with the samity and Managing Committee members together on 21 January 1988. The Caritas personnel had stated that there was no domination in the samity and that even the poorest landless would speak up freely in front of the Managing Committee. All attended except the secretary, who was away on urgent business (one of the landless used this as an example of how the Managing Committee were too busy to give enough attention to the fish culture). I questioned the members in order to obtain more information and they spoke out freely and intelligently about all their problems. They all knew the facts about their samity: how much was deposited in the bank, how many fingerlings were put in the pond, how many fish were caught and how much money was made, etc.

The main point was that the landless have come to realize that their own interests were not being served by the marginal farmers, especially the Managing Committee. The marginal farmers got substantial loans while they did not. It was for this very reason that Caritas had begun to work only with homogeneous groups, but this group had organized itself and presented itself to Caritas, so the landless and marginal farmers were not separated. The landless now want to go their own way and feel that they are sufficiently cohesive and trained to work well together.

## 7. Verification of hypotheses (No. 3)

a. The group had sufficient training and
b. self-awareness to evaluate the project
c. themselves without outside help (though it was the first time they were making such an evaluation). They understood clearly the essential issues and problems and expressed them sufficiently.

d. The trust among members broke down in 1986, after the secretary was discovered using funds for himself.

e. The outside evaluator (participant-observer) added nothing to the process of evaluation except to clarify some of the points which were too briefly expressed on paper and to get more details about them. His presence at the final evaluation did not impede the flow of information and the landless members openly criticized the Managing Committee and realistically exposed their hopes and plans for the future.

The Caritas Project Committee added helpful information but except for their explanation about loans to the members none of their other comments was indispensable for a clear understanding of the project.

## 8. Impact of evaluation

As a result of the evaluation, the samity and Caritas understood clearly that the main problem of the group was the disparity between the marginal farmers and the landless. Both groups appreciated the need of separating from each other. All appreciated what help Caritas had given them but understood that they had to work out the solution to this big problem b themselves.

The impact on me personally was tremendous, since my previous extensive contacts with field groups of the landless showed them to be, for the most part, willing to be led and placing their confidence in the leaders of their group. The present groups of landless were incisive and logical in their criticism of what was wrong with their samity.

## 9. Issues in evaluation

a. Are individuals and groups sufficiently able to undertake PE without special or scientific training?

b. Should the PE itself be the training process or should some prior instruction be given during regular group meetings?

c. Should changes in plans and projects be initiated at the time of PE or independent of it?

d. Does a trained and experienced evaluator and facilitator add substantially to the PE process?

e. Does an outside facilitator impede the process of self-reliant development in the long run?

RW TIMM

# LUISA AMANDA ESPINOZA WOMEN'S MOVEMENT, Nicaragua

## National context

On July 19, 1979, the Sandinista Popular Revolution triumphed in Nicaragua after 45 years of oppression by the Somocista dictatorship. This revolution is the culmination of the heroic initiative of General Sandino who fought US military intervention in the country between 1927 and 1933, forcing the United States to withdraw. Later Sandino was vilely assassinated by the forces of Anastasio Somoza Garcia, inheritor of that US occupation.

The Sandinista National Liberation Front led a broad alliance of economic, social and political forces against the Somocista military dictatorship. It formed a broad coalition government that carried out democratic, nationalist and popular tasks such as the nationalization of the banks and foreign commerce, the expansion of education and health for the popular sectors, the unionization of workers and peasants and the initiation of a democratic agrarian reform in favour of the peasantry. At the same time, it developed a foreign policy of non-alignment, and joined the Movement of Non-aligned Countries.

With the coming to office of the Reagan Administration in 1981, a systematic campaign against the Sandinista Popular Revolution was initiated that obliged it to redouble its military efforts to confront the mercenary bands that have caused 50,000 victims to date and to counteract the serious effects of the US economic blockade and financial aggression against the weak Nicaraguan economy.

As part of the democratization process, the first free elections in the history of the country were held in 1984, and in 1987 the political constitution of the country was promulgated, encompassing the main democratic, nationalist and popular principles of the revolution. In 1988 this democratization process is continuing with the upcoming elections for the Central American Parliament and for municipal government. It is appropriate to point out that in this electoral process and civic political struggle, a total of 15 political parties are functioning, seven of which are represented in the parliament.

The popular sectors have advanced palpably in their participatory, organizational, union and mobilizing capacity. Hundreds of unions of industrial and rural workers have been formed in the countryside and the cities; health and education workers have organized, as have professionals, residents of poor neighbourhoods, youth and the Luisa Amanda Espinoza Women's Movement.

In this way, the Sandinista revolution is sustained by a popular movement that is becoming for the first time in history a pillar of the participatory democracy we are building; it is becoming a free and organized expression of the people, just as the armed forces and popular militias are the expression of the armed people, the principal guarantee of the sustenance of the revolution in the face of the aggressiveness of the main world power, which openly, through its Administration and its Congress, sustains the mercenary aggression.

It should be pointed out that these mercenary forces are in a progressive military decline, the product of the offensive capacity of the Nicaraguan people. Nonetheless, the successes of the Reagan Administration can be seen in the physical destruction of cooperatives, school centres, workplaces, etc., and in the deterioration of the economic situation of the country in general, which has forced the development of an economic survival scheme that will undoubtedly last for many years.

Nicaragua, together with other Central American countries and with the support of Latin America and other democratic forces of the world, is promoting a peace process in the Central American region, based on the Esquipulas Accords signed in August 1987 and ratified in January of this year by the Central American presidents. Despite broad international support for the Esquipulas initiative, the US administration is trying to sabotage it and continue its aggressive policy in the region.

It is in this context that the Luisa Amanda Espinoza Women's Movement is promoting the pilot experiment of the Training Programme for Base Promotors and Leaders in Region IV of the country, an old coffee growing region and an important population centre since the precolonial period. It is the zone of the country with the highest population density despite its small size—only four per cent of the national territory.

## The Luisa Amanda Espinoza Women's Movement

The Luisa Amanda Espinoza Women's Movement (AMNLAE) emerged with the revolutionary triumph on July 19, 1979, as a result of the massive participation of women in the struggle against Somocismo and the political will of the FSLN to support and promote the diverse mass organizations mentioned above so they could represent and struggle for the particular interests of various social sectors in conjunction with the overall interests of the Sandinista Popular Revolution.

The immediate antecedent of AMNLAE was AMPRONAC (Association of Women Facing the National Problematic), founded at the end of 1977 at the initiative of the Sandinista Front and based in the struggle for human rights during the Somocista regime.

In March of last year the FSLN presented its Proclamation for work with Nicaraguan women, which marks a new stage in AMNLAE's work. Previously, we had some experiences around the resolution of specific women's problems, but AMNLAE's activity was concentrated fundamentally in promoting women's participation in the general tasks of the revolution.

The Proclamation emphasises AMNLAE as a fundamental movement for the ideological transformation of men and women, based on the resolution of the specific problems of women, which permits them to advance in achieving their emancipation and in greater and better participation in the general tasks of the revolution.

In this framework, political-ideological work is converted into the main focal point of AMNLAE, to be expressed in the different tools of propaganda,training and research which, although they have their specificities, must be managed in an articulated, parallel and complementary way around the organization of the movement and its platform of struggle.

Before the Proclamation AMNLAE's dynamic for political-ideological work was mainly centered in sporadic propaganda activities for campaigns, such as the preparation of leaflets, radio spots, some pamphlets, etc.

Few training activities were carried out either at the central level or other levels of AMNLAE. Those carried out before the Proclamation were around general concepts of propaganda, handling of cameras and tape recorders, popular education techniques, legal aspects and sex education, among others. In turn, such actions were not framed within a training strategy with either methodologies or explicit techniques.

Now AMNLAE is promoting the execution of various workshops to study the FSLN Proclamation. In turn, the Training Section presented a guide document for training that included the development of a series of activities with the Executive Secretariat and the National Committee, permitting the preparation of the Movement's Platform of Struggle and its new Political-Organizational Conception. At the same time, the pilot experiment of a Training Programme for Base Leaders and Promotors of the movement was begun last September in Region IV, with the goal of executing it in the rest of the regions this year.

With respect to the field of research, AMNLAE is beginning to coordinate with the Women's Institute, the Agrarian Reform Research Centre and the Nicaraguan Institute of Social Research, particularly to form a support and advisory team for the Training Programme for Base Leaders and Promoters based on participatory-action research methodology.

## The Training Programme for Base Leaders and Promoters of AMNLAE

The new political-organizational conception of the broad, democratic, plurisectoral Movement, which is inserted with different rhythms into the various mass organizations, trade unions, etc., is beginning to eliminate the previous form of organizing work, which was as an organization parallel to these others.

It is indispensable and urgent to place promotors or base professionals from the movement in the various sectors where they work to find and train base leaders, learn about and jointly systematize the problems of women in their work areas, and seek priority solutions that permit qualitatively and quantitatively greater participation in the major revolutionary tasks.

It is equally important to promote the exchange of experiences among women base leaders who have developed a certain level of awareness about detecting and solving the specific gender problematic.

## General objective of the programme

To contribute to the conduction of the movement through training in work organizing and planning.

## Specific objectives

That the participants :

1. internalize the Platform of Struggle and the new organizational-political conception of the movement;
2. comprehend their role within the movement, unifying concepts and criteria of the work;
3. develop awareness of their condition as women, their specific problematic and the factors that favour or impede their participation in revolutionary tasks;
4. acquire basic knowledge about popular education;
5. develop participatory-action investigations that permit them to do diagnostics of their work areas;
6. prepare work and struggle plans for their respective work centres;
7. become familiar with some basic training demands.

## Methodology used

We proposed developing a participatory-action investigation that would quickly permit base leaders and promoters to do diagnostics of their work areas in relation to the socio-economic situation prevailing there, the organizational-political situation of the union or sectoral body and the specific problematic of women.

For that purpose, a Support Team, made up of researchers working in the various research centres of the country, prepared a proposal for instruments which was presented to the participants in a first intersectoral workshop we developed, employing the popular education methodology. This was used in the remainder of the activities.

Afterward, we proposed providing follow-up and support to the execution of the diagnostic to later systematize the information obtained in such a way as to permit its analysis. In sector meetings orientations were given for this systematization.

In sectoral workshops the data was reflected on and the respective struggle plans were prepared.

Finally, in a third intersectoral workshop the struggle plans were socialized and methodological and technical guidelines were set up for the preparation for the work plans.

## Participants

In addition to the sectoral base leaders and professional promotors of AMNLAE in Region IV, we proposed that the following participate in the various activities of the programme:

—the regional executive secretery of AMNLAE, and particularly its secretary general and person in charge of propaganda and training;

—the sectoral delegates of the Regional Committee of the peasant, industrial worker and community sectors;

—those in charge of members of the training teams of the sectors participating in the programme ;

—those in charge of AMNLAE training from the other regions to permit them to function as trainers in action;

—the support team for the training programme, made up of the various researchers from the research centres and members of the sectoral training teams; and

—AMNLAE's national training team.

## Programme phases

This pilot experiment has implied the following phases :

### First Phase : Sensitizing the participants

In this phase, the following actions were carried out :

--presentation and approval of the programme of AMNLAE's National Committee and of the Executive Secretariat of Region IV;

—a working meeting in the region with the Regional Executive to carry out a series of tasks such as promoting study of the proclamation and the organisational-political conception of the movement among programme participants; placing the promoters in their work sectors; collecting and studying information from the sector where they were placed ; presentation, by the participants, of the list of information considered important to include in the instruments for the diagnostics; presentation of official list of participants at the first workshop.

—calling the first workshop of the programme

## Second Phase : Participatory diagnostic by region

In this phase the following actions were carried out :

—a three-day workshop was held with the participation of 37 companeras with the goal of accomplishing the following objectives:

1. The participants characterized their previous work and gained an understanding of the role they are going to assume.
2. They acquired the knowledge and skills necessary to do a participatory diagnostic of their respective work areas and prepare their corresponding work plans for its realization.
3. They became familiar with some theoretical elements for observing and analysing the reality of Nicaraguan women.

—they carried out a participatory diagnostic through which a total of 2303 people in the base participated: 1171 women from poor neighbourhoods, 395 industrial workers and 837 peasants, both male and female. It affected 66 neighbourhoods, nine factories, 21 rural cooperative development polls and 33 population areas in the countryside.

—working meetings; by sector, oriented people about how to systemative the information.

## Third Phase : Preparation and execution of the struggle and work plans

This phase has implied the following actions:

—A workshop by sector (three in all) to analyse the information and prepare the respective struggle plans of industrial workers, peasants and neighbourhood dwellers from a gender perspective.

—Evaluation of the development of the programme to date, which was carried out in the intersectoral workshop mentioned above.

—An intersectoral workshop to socialize the struggle plans corresponding to each of the participating sectors and to become familiar with some technical-methodological orientations for preparing their work plans.

—A process of executing the work plans by the promoters and base leaders.

## Fourth Phase : Follow-up, control and evaluation

We sought to prepare a system of follow-up, control and evaluation of the work plans in support of the work of leading the movement.

## Evaluation of the programme

Although we understood the evaluation as a permanent and continuing process in all stages of the training programmes (diagnostic or detection of necessities, planning, carrying out, and follow-up and feedback), it was not conceived of that way for the programme for movement leaders. That was mainly due to a lack of sufficient knowledge and personnel in the training team for the design and execution of the system.

Nonetheless, we carried out some partial evaluations in the stage of effecting the programme. Although they were limited and we still have to continue processing them, they

can serve in some measure to make the variations and adjustments necessary to execute the programme in the other regions of the country, as well as to give adequate follow-up to this pilot experiment.

Below we present the most important results of these, including the objectives that we set out and the techniques we used.

## Results

We did two partial evaluations. The first during the second phase of the programme, in the first intersectoral workshop; the second in the third phase of the programme, in the second intersectoral workshop.

In both evaluations we implicitly proposed the following general objectives:

—to verify whether the actions were executed in accord with the programmed activities and according to the defined principles and procedures, detecting deviations so as to make the appropriate corrections;

—to measure the efficiency shown during the execution of the training, as well as the effectiveness of the methods and instruments employed;

—to measure efficacy in achieving the programmed objectives and goals, identifying the results of the training actions.

## Evaluation carried out in the first workshop

In this evaluation we proposed the following specific objectives:

—to learn about the experience of political-organizational work that the trainees have;

—to verify the level of knowledge of the trainees with respect to the gender problematic;

—to assess the fulfilment of the objectives of the workshop and the limits that up to now were showing up in the programme.

To obtain the required information we used the following instruments:

—An initial questionnaire on the Efficacy of the Teaching-Learning Process, presented at the beginning of the workshop, with a series of questions about related aspects of leadership and organization of the movement, as well as the specific problematic of women. They were filled out individually.

—A Technical-Operative Questionnaire, with group questions and responses, aimed at evaluating the workshop in relation to fulfilment of organizational objectives and aspects and their coordination.

—A Final Individual Questionnaire on the Efficacy of the Teaching-Learning Process to contrast it with the initial knowledge of the workshop.

—Direct observation of the process.

The results of the Final Questionnaire on Efficacy were the following:

—There was consensus regarding the personal characteristics that leaders must develop, which are to: be linked to the bases, be self-critical, start from reality to carry out the work, be humble and use simple, communicative, planned and evaluative work styles and methods.

—The companeras identified the most relevant manifestations of oppression suffered by women, which are physical mistreatment, economic dependency, the double day, little technical training, the reproduction of family roles as the product of a machista ideology, the existence of discriminatory laws and the low cultural, political and ideological level, which carries with it submission and dependence.

—The majority concluded that in order to begin to break the oppressive situation they are submitted to, Nicaraguan women have to acquire feminine consciousness, achieve higher levels of training, carry out various actions that permit ideological transformation, get the state institutions to be concerned with the rights of women and promote the preparation of laws in favour of women. Few mentioned their integration into economic life.

—In relation to their comprehension about what a diagnostic is and what it is for, the majority responded that it was a study through which one acquired knowledge about reality and that it serves as a guide for the preparation of their work plans.

—With respect to the aspects that must be contemplated in a work plan and their utility, the majority responded that these serve to organize the work and to direct

it well. Some also pointed out their usefulness for planning.

Regarding the technical-operative questionnaire, which allowed them to evaluate the workshop, the majority answered as follows:

—The objectives of acquiring knowledge for carrying out the diagnostic and comprehension about the situation of oppression that women live under were fulfilled; and the differentiation of general demands of women and their specific gender demands was accomplished.

—In relation to the methodology of the workshop, they concluded that this permitted them to fix the knowledge in their minds and promote the participation of the leaders, in particular through the group work; that the coordination had been very good, as well as the material conditions necessary for housing, food and development of the taller.

We have not yet systematized the Initial Questionnaire on the Efficacy of the Education-Learning Process and therefore it was not contrasted with the similar Final Questionnaire.

## Limitations

Through direct observation at the workshop and the analysis of the above-mentioned evaluations, we were able to detect the following limitations:

—At that moment, the programme was not taken up by the majority of the various leadership bodies of the movement, particularly in the region itself, which undermined the coordination necessary for its implementation. The importance of training for and in function of the organization had not been assimilated, which meant that attendance at the workshop was a little less than 50 per cent of those invited; in their majority promoters (90 per cent) instead of base leaders, and the former were not all found in their work sectors, which was a fundamental requisite for the workshop.

This reflects the tension that exists between the old work styles and the assimilation of the forms we want to promote, which question the conjuncturalist, activist and disordered work styles. Furthermore, we need to be clear about the dialectic relation that exists between the movement, the vanguard and the state apparatus, and the way in which this should be expressed. Particularly, we need to better understand the level of autonomy that the movement should have to permit it to act democratically, with greater insistence, expressing women's different banners of struggle, and we need to develop greater convocatory capacity for the various activities carried out.

—The less than 50 per cent attendance, mainly of promoters, implied the need for them to reproduce some issues of the workshop (such as the use of the diagnostic instrument) without having been trained for it.

—The instruments for the diagnostic were not sampled. It would have been desirable to do so for enriching both their language and content. Nonetheless, it started from the accumulated experience of the research members of the programme's support team. The ideal thing, as a consequence of the participatory methodology, would have been to hold a workshop strictly for the elaboration of these instruments.

—The Support Team for AMNLAE Training has not succeeded in coming together in a stable way with the research companeras of the different research centres and sectoral trainers. This implies the need for greater sensitization work about the potential of the participatory-action research methodology for organized, educational and research political action that precisely seeks to articulate knowledge acquired at the macro-academic level with popular knowledge.

—It is necessary for the professionals and base leaders to go forward in an intense way in acquiring a feminist consciousness to enable them to develop greater analytic capacity in their work. Inasmuch as the programme contemplates the presentation of theoretical themes in each of the activities proposed, it is necessary to execute the Intensive Programme about Gender Theory at the same time as this programme, to permit a more accelerated intellectual development by the companeras considering their leadership role and their need to coherently interpret the problematic they are facing in their daily work.

## Evaluation carried out in the second workshop

In this evaluation we suggested, as a general objective, familiarizing ourselves in an overall way with the results to date of the whole process of training we are promoting, with the goal of deciding about continuing and reproducing it in the other regions of the country.

We used a question guide to respond in groups. This could be enriched by the participants. In synthesis, the results were the following :

—50 per cent of the participants in the second workshop were present in the first one.

—The sectors were understanding the new political-organizational conception of the movement.

—The diagnostic fulfilled its objective, permitting them greater knowledge about their work areas for preparing their respective struggle plans. Obstacles were also pointed out, such as lack of compliance with the programming that did not permit technical support during the information preparation phase; a weakness in the instruments that did not permit the questions to be correctly interpreted, the date to be quantified and thus greater knowledge of the sector to be gained; some were done by companeras who had not participated in the formation workshop for their implementation.

—The role of the promoters of the movement and their placement in the sectors was being defined.

—The struggle plans of the sectors involved were prepared from a gender viewpoint.

—The participants succeeded in differentiating general demands of women from their gender demands, as well as in better understanding the new participatory and democratic styles and methods that should characterize the work of the movement.

—New base leaders were identified.

—The work plans have been prepared for achieving the objectives proposed in the struggle plans.

—Lack of support by the top leadership bodies of the movement.

## Reflection about the evaluative processes

As a result of our experiment, its achievements and limitations as well as of various readings on the theme, we drew the following conclusions regarding the significance and importance of the evaluative process. These will be taken up in the design and execution of evaluation systems that should complement the various training experiences we promote, including follow-up of this pilot experiment and its reproduction in the other regions of the country.

In a very general way we understand as evaluation the systematic process that identifies, explains and contributes information to support the taking of decisions and feedback to the leaders and participants about proposals, actions or results of the programme to which it is applied. Furthermore, it permits, through appraisals and analysis, a comparison of the various elements of the programme with previously determined parameters for integrating useful information at each moment in the taking of decisions.

We conceive it as an integral process of training, a system which must be present during all its moments or stages (diagnostics or detection of needs, planning, execution, follow-up and feedback); which is used as a method of research and knowledge to permit the detection, systematization and analysis of actions carried out with the goal of recovering and integrating experiences, giving feedback to their suggestions in a continuous way.

In our pilot experiment we did some evaluations only in the execution stage of the programme. In future experiments, however, we are contemplating an evaluation system that includes all stages of the process. For example, we did not do an explicit diagnostic about training needs that we consider fundamental to being precise about the reach, depth and veracity of detecting needs, and which could be achieved by evaluating the sufficiency of the diagnostic.

If, in the majority of cases, we situate the evaluation as a necessary moment within the realization of any event, we believe that it should not be understood as an aspect separated from the training actions, or as an external action that can be applied at moments and about aspects isolated from the training process. It only makes sense if it is inserted in and directly related to this process, as an action tied to all training, as a

research method for action, that it be present from start to finish.

In the diagnostic and detection of needs, the evaluation permits us to determine if the objectives, content, strategies and structure of the programme generally respond to the previously detected needs.

When the event is being planned, evaluation permits constant feedback about the process by analysing aspects such as the programme's coherency and the viability of the objectives, techniques, etc., proposed for its development.

While carrying out the programme, evaluation can acquire greater dynamism by contributing elements that permit verification, control and feedback about the training actions in function of the originally proposed objectives which had already been evaluated and determined as appropriate to respond to the detected needs.

Finally, in the follow-up and feedback stage, evaluation, by taking the results of the different partial evaluations, permits us: an overall vision by detecting the successes and limitations to use in giving feedback about the development of future programmes: to evaluate the results of training insofar as it appraises the direct effects it had on the work of the trainees; as well as the contribution it made to the changes occurring in the region's conditions.

MALENA DEMONTIS

# TRAINING FOR PARTICIPATORY EVALUATION

## Introduction

People's participation has been strongly advocated for some time in the planning, implementation and monitoring of a wide range of development activities. Unfortunately, when it came to 'evaluation' the voices of the advocates of participation faltered. In fact, they usually petered out. In the ensuing silence the fragments of their rationale gradually emerged to form a fairly coherent picture. It was not an attractive one. Its elements included an uncritical subservience to the mystiques of conventional evaluation approaches, an unswerving bias towards complex, costly and highly quantitative evaluation methods, inability to perceive the need for a broader range of evaluation approaches and skills, and a general reluctance to extend participatory principles to evaluation. Such an attitude revealed a serious under-rating particularly at middle and community level of the capacities of the practitioner actually involved in implementing development activities. It also revealed vested interest groups.

A popular keyword in framing objections to participatory evaluation has been the term 'scientific'. Conventional evaluation methods were said to be more 'scientific'. They were said to be more 'objective', reliable and valid. They were also said to generate a larger body of quantitative data, supposedly more relevant to government agency needs. However, there has also been a slow but discernible and increasing disenchantment with the results of conventional evaluation methods. Thus moves have been made towards developing less costly, less expert-dependent and more self-reliant evaluation approaches. It is now argued that it is better to have less perfect but more usable data. It is also better to have less evaluation data which can more easily be shared than a massive amount which becomes the private (and often confidential) possession of a few.

Within this framework practitioners in diverse parts of the world have been developing a range of evaluation approaches and methods which are based on people's participation. Much has been learnt and adapted from earlier participatory experiences in the fields of community development and adult education. People are involved in defining their own evaluation needs, building on existing intellectual and leadership capabilities and practical skills, and refining group work methods. Participants are enabled to analyse systematically their own reality and to increase self-reliance and self-determination. It is perhaps this last feature that is the most controversial. While many people in development activities may be ready to share responsibility, there are few who are genuinely ready to share power. It also appears difficult for some development systems to adjust readily to real shifts of power towards the periphery. Such shifts involve changes in patterns and responsibilities for decision making and resource allocation. They also reveal differences in conceptual frameworks between those at the 'top' and those at the 'bottom'.

While some of the shortcomings of conventional evaluation approaches have been outlined above, it is not the intention of this article to suggest that participatory evaluation approaches are somehow a 'panacea' for all such shortcomings. Participatory evaluation approaches have their own characteristics and strengths, but they too at present have shortcomings. Both are considered in the following sections. They are examined in the context of four specific experiences of training participants for participatory evaluation in countries in the Far East and Pacific Region between 1983-1986.

## Characteristics of the training experiences

All training experiences were related to the rural areas of developing countries. The following matrix provides basic information as to general location and characteristics of the training :

| Location | Length/Type of Training | Participants | Range/Educational Technical Levels |
|---|---|---|---|
| A. South Asia | Two-day intensive training preceding six-week evaluation of inter-sectoral community health development pilot project | District level government staff from health, education, agriculture community development and forestry departments; local government officials; community health workers | Primary<br>Secondary<br>Tertiary<br>Postgraduate<br>Technical |
| B. Northern Pacific Region | Intensive training during 10-day conference of 27 non-governmental community based and social development programmes | Physicians, nurses, veterinaries, CD staff, religious staff, community health workers (one-quarter of participants) | Primary<br>Secondary<br>Tertiary<br>Postgraduate<br>Technical |
| C. North Asia | One-day exercise during one-month training to establish pilot primary care project | Government health staff from national, provincial and district level; government officials | Primary<br>Secondary<br>Tertiary<br>Postgraduate<br>Technical |
| D. Central America | On the job training during three-month evaluation of non-governmental health and social development project | Project staff from Peasant Women's Federation and community health workers | Majority had sixth grade primary education; one illiterate |

The individual country settings vary considerably in terms of location, culture, language, political system and population. However, an analysis of these different training processes generates findings which may be of relevance to existing and intending practitioners of participatory evaluation approaches.

## Preparations for training

The most basic preparation for training in all cases was to ensure that project participants and interested groups (government departments, agencies and institutions) had a common understanding of the meaning and purpose of participatory evaluation. In the North Pacific country a set of training modules had been prepared by the evaluation facilitator with representatives from the community based health programmes concerned. These were based on study of the programmes (some in their actual contexts), discussions with staff and communities and previous experiences in participatory evaluation. The modules (each not exceeding two pages) were designed for one to two hours' sessions during the 10-day training workshop for 82 participants. They followed a sequence designed to provide a basic conceptual framework for practitioners. The modules began by posing several basic questions such as "What is Participatory Evaluation" and "Who is it for?" They then continued through the basic evaluation process of planning, selecting and testing methods, data collection, analysis, reporting and use of findings.

Participatory evaluation was presented as a circular process with the findings and conclusions linked closely with plans for the future action of the on-going project. For most participants this concept was novel. They tended to see evaluation as a more linear process which starts with the arrival of external evaluators and ends when they depart taking with them the data

collected during the evaluation process.

While participants in three of the cases were familiar with monitoring activities, the idea that they themselves were to participate in a major way in the evaluation process was novel. In the South Asian country district staff from various development sectors and local government officials had been informed through a 'top-down' order that an evaluation was to take place. The time scale of the evaluation had already been agreed. Within this context preparations were made for a two-day training workshop, using selected and adapted modules. The brevity of the training for participatory evaluation was particularly offset by the greater homogeneity and smaller number (20) of the group than in case B (82).

An important feature of training (however brief) was to enable participants to gain confidence in their own evaluation capabilities. Particular emphasis was placed from the start on analysing their customary methods of monitoring and management. For example the range of record-keeping was examined. Selected analysis of the data collected revealed strengths and weaknesses in the monitoring system, relevance to programme objectives and assisted participants in framing evaluation objectives and planning for the approaches and methods required in their respective evaluations.

The participants in case A came from various development sectors. This required extra time to be devoted to an explanation of the different sectoral functions and the terminologies of the various sectors. Time was however saved by participants not considering it necessary to devote too much time to discussing *why* to evaluate. From their point of view they had received an order to do so and appeared content to carry it out.

In cases A to C participants were involved in designing the training curricula. This constitutes the first part of any participatory training process. Any externally designed curricula imposed on participants would not have enabled them to understand the rationale for training, why specific training elements were necessary, how the elements needed to be placed in sequence or how their own skills and abilities could be used and expanded.

It is said there are two ways of learning to swim: one way is to learn gradually at the shallow end of a pool. The other is to make a dramatic entry into the deep end. In the latter case, it is suggested that the art of swimming can be more rapidly acquired. Without digressing into the water-logged flaws in this argument, it can be said that the subsequent performance of participants in case D indicated that they had indeed accomplished the main learning objectives over the three-month period. However, had a short training been provided before the evaluation perhaps the evaluation process would have been less arduous. In all cases there was an emphasis on using locally available and low-cost materials such as writing paper, poster paper, and writing instruments. In cases A and B such materials were not in short supply due to the entrepreneurial ventures of local merchants. In C and D such materials were both scarce and very expensive. They had to be carefully 'rationed'.

## Planning evaluation and identifying objectives

Some confusion arose in cases A, B and D over which were project objectives and which were evaluation objectives. The links between the two were obvious, but there were subtle and important differences which participants needed to grasp. A useful exercise in assisting participants to identify evaluation objectives involved posing questions. For example, in case A participants divided their project activities into different categories such as health, agriculture, education, community development, community involvement and 'research and development' surveys. Within these categories participants then identified the questions which needed to be addressed during the evaluation.

Participants did not initially find it easy to differentiate between questions which would provide data on process, e.g., how many patients are being seen per week by individual village-based community health workers; and those which aimed to reveal what *impact* the project was making, such as what changes had there been in the patterns of morbidity and mortality during the past two years. Groups of participants were elected to assume special responsibility for identifying the approaches and methods by which the questions could be answered: for example, a questionnaire was designed to evaluate the effectiveness of the original training received by programme staff who trained community health workers. Meetings and field trips were planned and arranged to enable community representatives to participate in evaluating project progress in their own areas.

One general problem encountered by participants in all cases was understanding the pur-

poses and types of indicators of progress. In case B indicators were likened to 'milestones' which could inform participants of progress achieved during a journey. The analogy, presented visually, worked well. During training it was necessary to translate into clear, and where possible visual terms, many of the often complex concepts and processes of evaluation. This work of 'de-mystification' is fundamental if the learning process is to be successful. There are at present relatively few training materials of this sort available. In this training and planning approach a project is deliberately 'fragmented' in order that participants can perceive these fragments and how they fit—or should fit—together in order to achieve certain project objectives. This stage of training often reveals original project design faults. As this can be a sensitive finding an atmosphere of rapport and trust must already have been established. During training the actual evaluation plan is constructed and a 'core group' of participants assume responsibility for carrying it out within a specific time frame. A chalkboard and/or whiteboard are useful for planning purposes as adjustments can more easily be made than on paper. It is important to have a centrally located and easily available evaluation plan. A smaller board is useful for daily or weekly monitoring of evaluation activities.

Part of planning for participatory evaluation involves thinking about how community representatives and members will be involved in the evaluation process. In case D only community level participants were involved with the facilitator. The core evaluation team prepared a two-page information sheet outlining the purpose, process and sequence of their intending evaluation. This was widely distributed in the project area and feedback from village level was used to guide the subsequent evaluation process.

In case A community representatives did not attend the training due to its brevity and urgency. However, they were involved in data collection, analysis and discussion of findings. In case B community representatives constituted about 25 per cent of all participants. In case C no community participants were involved in the evaluation exercise to establish the pilot project as it took place during a national level training course.

## Learning to use the tools of evaluation

During training the selection and preparation of evaluation methods have to be made bearing in mind the objectives of the evaluation, the experience and capabilities of participants and a combination of locally determined factors such as geographic conditions, distances involved, materials and reproducing facilities available. The aim is one of producing and using the best range of methods appropriate to the circumstances.

Participants are helped to examine their existing methods of management and monitoring in order to adapt what is useful for the evaluation. They may be familiar with how surveys and questionnaires are constructed and pretested. Participants may only be familiar with a limited range of evaluation methods. They will need to expand and adapt them. For example, in case D due to time constraints a group questionnaire method was adopted. Members of the core evaluation team held village meetings. Using a school blackboard, each family was given a code number and then the whole group provided data which was ranged on the prepared blackboard matrix. Village members then participated in analysing and discussing the results.

Interview techniques are difficult for participants to learn in a short time. By drawing out some main guidelines certain skills can be learnt. However, there is usually insufficient time to practice them. The actual field-testing (i.e. piloting the methodology) is not the best time for training interviewers. In practice unfortunately circumstances may make it very difficult to do it at any other time. The only safeguards appear to be in selecting interviewers very carefully and in identifying individuals who have the range of interpersonal skills necessary for effective interviewing. Also, constant feedback, while interviewing is being carried out, can help improve practice while it develops.

In all cases participants generally experienced difficulty in attending to the meticulous detail on which effective evaluation methodology must be based. This occurred irrespective of the educational or technical levels or the practical experiences of participants. Even where participants were meticulous in carrying out what they saw as 'normal duties', they had initial difficulty in translating this characteristic to the rigours of evaluation methodology. Perhaps this was partly because evaluation had been regarded as "somebody else's responsibility", e.g.,an outside evaluator's. Also until participants adopt responsibility for the evaluation it may appear as an extra burden to practitioners who already carry a heavy workload.

But once the adoption process has taken place

the momentum of the evaluation produces a speed and rhythm of its own. Participants are borne along on alternating waves of enthusiasm and fatigue as the demanding process evolves. It is here that the role of an evaluation facilitator is of particular importance. During periods of fatigue and even alienation, the facilitator non-directively provides support and guidance to participants. During training it is therefore important that participants are alerted to the possible rhythms of the evaluation process. In cases A and B participants benefited from learning through a case-study and slide presentation of the experiences of others who had carried out participatory evaluation in countries with circumstances similar to their own.

## Training for data analysis

This part of the training focused on two specific types of data used in participatory evaluation. The first was data which already existed such as project records, reports and survey results. The second was new data which was collected during the evaluation period such as that resulting from interviews, questionnaires, surveys, meetings and case studies.

The training for data analysis began by assisting participants to focus on their normal management and monitoring system. They did this by analysing samples of data. In case A content analysis was carried out on all available health data (health centre, hospital, mobile teams and community health worker records) for a single village over a specific period. This revealed, among other findings, the need to adjust the record-keeping system as some records were using different age and disease and gender classifications, which prevented certain collations. Changes in one part of an information system usually necessitate changes in the whole system. Within a bureaucratic system this takes time. In all cases (A to D) the feedback loops in the management information system were negligible. Information generally proceeded upwards and rarely back to its original generators. Those who collected and collated the information had not been encouraged to analyse it. Analysis was regarded as the function of a higher official.

From analyses arise conclusions. From conclusions decisions are made. By clinging to narrow definitions of who is eligible to analyse data, the pool of decision-makers will continue to be narrow. Experience is beginning to indicate the value of increasing the analytical responsibilities and capacities of a wider range of people at different levels of a management information system. Such a system is less prone to generate invalid data, as those involved understand the purpose and implications of the data gathered.

In case C survey data had been collected prior to the course. The responsibility for all such data analysis had been entrusted to a newly formed national level computerized Statistics Unit. Due to work pressure, however, the unit had not been able to analyse the district survey data. The training course needed that data as one base for participatory curriculum development to ensure that the course was tailored to the needs of the district as revealed in the survey. It became possible for the Statistics Unit to release the data for participants to carry out primary analysis. This took place during a two-hour period with 30 participants and a course facilitator using two blackboards. Different groups collated piles of survey data sheets and the resulting data was recorded for all groups on the blackboard.

This analytical and visual group activity was able to provide participants (some of whom had taken part in the survey) with both a simple participatory mechanism for rapid data analysis and in this case the survey results they needed to design and develop their own training course.

Training in analysis also needs to extend to community based workers who can use various methods such as tally sheets, not just to collect and collate data, but also to analyse its implications. For community level participants numeracy presents a problem in basic quantitative analysis. In case D the availability and interpretation of quantitative data was strongly related to the educational grades and numeracy of the peasant women concerned. The evaluation process had to be tailored to their capabilities and needs. In case A the training process involved a much wider range of participants—from physicians to peasants. Bearing in mind the basic principle that process and outcomes had to be comprehensible to all, it was not always easy to find effective solutions which were fully appreciated by those with primary education grades only and which did not at the same time slightly frustrate those with postgraduate levels of education and technical training.

It is necessary to further develop the range of quantitative evaluation methods used by participants who have few grades of primary education or who are not literate. The basis of such methods must be an understanding of the way in which people at community level normally count and measure things. For example, a farmer in the Philippines places a grain of corn

in a tin for every rod of tobacco leaves that he plans to sell to the tobacco merchant. Then he counts the grains of corn so that he knows how many rods he has and how much money he should receive.

## Reporting and using evaluation findings

For an evaluation report to be 'action oriented' it must be in a form easy to understand and use. During training the facilitator built up participants' confidence in their own capability to produce such a report. Many participants had never seen an evaluation report. Those who had, found them lengthy, complex and partly incomprehensible. Such reports are usually compiled for a limited audience. Experience indicates that once the basic principles of effective reporting are grasped there are a whole range of presentations that can be produced by participants. In case A the evaluation process culminated in a seven-day workshop where findings were shared and discussed and compiled into a 127-page report. Community leaders then suggested that if project staff could prepare a 2-3 pages report, this could be shared and discussed at the annual general community meeting. In case B, participants developed a range of posters and visual presentations suitable for sharing with community level audiences. These included the use of shapes cut from leaves of various colours to make a simple poster representing local health statistics. Although such materials were not long lasting they were easily available and cost nothing. In case D peasant women participants themselves wrote the greater part of their 95 pages evaluation report, which contained a few tables. This was then distributed to key project personnel in the province.

During training participants also had to be alerted to the phenomena of 'embarrassing' or 'unwelcome' findings. Such findings may be the reason why some evaluation reports suffer the fate of 'file and forget', in other words the results are not shared.

The extent to which findings are in fact used is influenced by a variety of factors. The will to implement the findings may exist but the resources to do so may not. On the other hand additional action may result. In case D the project was unable to obtain the further technical training desired within the country. By obtaining a modest grant they were able to travel across the national frontiers to obtain that training in a project similar to theirs in a neighbouring country. Prior to the evaluation they had hardly been out of their own province.

## The facilitator's multifaceted role

It has been said that the presence of an experienced and sensitive 'outsider' can encourage a group to formulate and articulate its thoughts more systematically and objectively and enrich discussions by bringing in other experiences, perceptions, perspectives and dimensions. There can be areas which local people either forget to look at, or do not want to look at. An outsider can play an important role by asking the right kind of questions and providing useful insights into dealing with dilemmas and uncertainties. Evaluation methodology forms part of many vocational and university courses, but is often presented only as part of a management process. While the monitoring is stressed, the wider and deeper issues relating to impact evaluation (i.e., relating to outcomes) may be passed over rapidly. Such issues are deemed to belong more to the realm of the 'expert evaluator'. This undercuts the confidence of a wider range of people to assume the role of 'evaluation facilitator'. In addition, many teaching/learning styles in institutions and universities continue to be blatantly non-participatory. In such situations the learner receives little opportunity to develop attitudes and skills designed to make learning a mutual process between teacher and learner. The 'teacher' in a participatory evaluation process is both a 'learner' and a 'researcher'. In such a process the task of the researcher becomes not to produce knowledge but to facilitate the construction of knowledge by the community itself.

From the experiences briefly described in this article some general guidelines emerge relating to the complex and demanding role of a participatory evaluation facilitator, in both the training and evaluation processes.

i. A relationship of trust and confidence must be rapidly established between facilitator, project staff and participants.

ii. Where possible the facilitator should live directly with project staff and participants thus increasing the range of mutual learning opportunities and shared experiences.

iii. The role that the facilitator expects to play must be clarified and agreed early in the relationship.

iv. Negotiation is also necessary between all interested parties (government, agencies, project staff and participants) regarding evaluation objectives and methodology.

v. The facilitator must be familiar with the rationale and basic approaches of partici-

patory learning and teaching.

vi. A non-directive leadership style is the most appropriate, with the facilitator assuming overall responsibility within the context of shared leadership.

vii. The facilitator must adapt the leadership style to provide more support where needed and less where existing competencies are strong. Sensitivity in changes in the evaluation process is essential.

viii. Abilities are needed to diffuse and resolve situations of tension and also possible differences in viewpoints during the arduous evaluation process.

ix. Abilities are also needed to withstand possible degrees of animosity during the evaluation process as participants more familiar with *ad hoc* procedures may consider the facilitator unnecessarily meticulous as far as attention to detail is concerned.

x. Only as the facilitator becomes sufficiently familiar with the context and operational procedures of the project can the final choice of appropriate evaluation methods be made.

xi. The real challenge lies not in getting the people to fit the methods, but in getting the methods to fit the people.

## Concluding comment

A participatory evaluation approach is not only an evaluative but also an educational approach. In addition it increases the management capacities of project staff and participants. In this steadily evolving approach there is a need for increased contact and cooperation between its practitioners. From the brief analysis of the four cases of training for participatory evaluation on which this paper is based, common principles, practices and constraints have been drawn out. It is actual practice that must guide the further refinement of the approach. The evolution of an ever widening range of flexible methodology is needed in line with the needs of different cultural and political contexts, educational levels and the characteristics of the various development sectors.

Finally, perhaps the most fundamental constraint to the more rapid adoption of participatory evaluation remains at a deep conceptual level. A 'conceptual framework' is like a system of values and attitudes which result in a specific view of reality. Conventional evaluation approaches have been based largely on a narrow set of western and elite-dominated conceptual frameworks. For this reason such approaches have given scant recognition to the validity of a wider range of frameworks including those found at community level. Or, to put it another way, are the powerless and poor to continue to be judged by others using sets of assumptions and value judgements constructed very largely without their participation ?

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# ABOUT US

The Society for Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA), New Delhi is a non-profit voluntary organization registered under the Indian Society's Act.

Participatory Research is a methodology based on the belief that knowledge is power and therefore contributes towards the empowerment of the oppressed and the poor. It promotes the involvement of the poor and their organizations and representatives in the creation and utilization of knowledge in their own collective interests. Thus, it attempts to challenge the monopoly over knowledge and its tools in the hands of the few.

PRIA works with local groups and activists involved in the education and organization-building efforts and struggles of the marginalized and underprivileged sections of society.

We provide support through research, training, evaluation, networking with groups on common issues and preparation and dissemination of learning materials.

We are a team of 15 people working with several partner groups all over India

In the last six years of its existence, PRIA has specially focused on primary health care and adult non-formal education, problems of deforestation, land alienation and large dams, women and work, women and sanitation, occupational health hazards and management issues of NGOs.

PRIA is constantly involved in efforts to promote the understanding and practice of PT philosophy and methodology by holding workshops and documenting several efforts in the country.

The text of this report has been compiled by Anil Chaudhary, Suneeta Dhar and Rajesh Tandon.

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